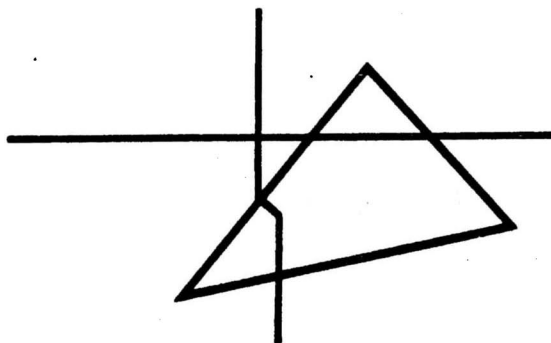


# WANSALAWARA

## Soundings in Melanesian History



**Introduced by BRIJ LAL**

Working Paper Series  
Pacific Islands Studies Program  
Centers for Asian and Pacific Studies  
University of Hawaii at Manoa

## EDITOR'S NOTE

Brij Lal's introduction discusses both the history of the teaching of Pacific Islands history at the University of Hawaii and the origins and background of this particular working paper. Lal's comments on this working paper are quite complete and further elaboration is not warranted.

Lal notes that in the fall semester of 1983, both he and David Hanlon were appointed to permanent positions in Pacific history in the Department of History. What Lal does not say is that this represented a monumental shift of priorities at this University. Previously, as Lal notes, Pacific history was taught by one individual and was deemed more or less unimportant. The sole representative maintained a constant struggle to keep Pacific history alive, but the battle was always uphill.

The year 1983 was a major, if belated, turning point. Coinciding with a national recognition that the Pacific Islands could no longer be ignored, the Department of History appointed both Lal and Hanlon as assistant professors. The two have brought a new life to Pacific history at this university. New courses and seminars have been added, and both men have attracted a number of new students. The University of Hawaii is the only American university that devotes serious attention to Pacific history.

Robert C. Kiste  
Director  
Center for Pacific Islands Studies

WANSALAWARA

Soundings in Melanesian History

Introduced by  
BRIJ V. LAL

1987

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction	Brij V. Lal	1
2. The United States Exploring Expedition to Fiji	Roberta Sprague	12
3. Firearms on Malaita, 1870-1900	Paul D'Arcy	50
4. Kastom Versus Cross. A Battle for Cultural Hegemony on Tanna	David Richardson	88
5. When Black is Transparent: French Colonialism in New Caledonia, 1878-1914	Chantal Ferraro	119
6. Dancing Yet to the Dim Dim's Beat. Contemporary Poetry in Papua New Guinea	Richard Hamasaki	157
7. List of Contributors		204



## INTRODUCTION

WANSALAWARA - those who share the same ocean, in Tok Pisin - is a collection of essays submitted to my graduate seminar in South Pacific history in the Fall of 1985 and subsequently revised and expanded in the Pacific Research Seminar in Spring 1986. As the first attempt ever to publish such a volume of essays by graduate students in Pacific Islands history, this installment is an experiment, we hope not a terminal one. It gives our superior, prize-winning graduate students encouragement and enables them to share the initial fruits of their research with others in the field. It gives us some insight into the kinds of issues and problems that interest them. And not least, since all the essays are based on primary sources and touch upon critical historiographical and methodological issues in Pacific Islands history, this collection makes a contribution to the larger field as well. In short, the reasons for making this volume available to the public are self-evident. The really intriguing question is: why was such an exercise not undertaken earlier? The answer lies not in the quality of work done by our former graduates, the best of whom have become highly regarded professional scholars in their own right. Rather, the explanation lies in the tortuous development of the discipline of Pacific Islands history at the University of Hawaii.

Pacific Islands history developed at Hawaii in the late 1950s, separate from Hawaiian as well as European imperial history. Tom Murphy appears to have been the first person to have offered courses in Pacific Islands history at the University. He was not a trained Pacific specialist. Indeed, there

were few such specialists at that time anywhere in the world with the exception of the Australian National University where the first systematic Pacific Islands study began under the direction of Professors J.W. Davidson and H.E. Maude. Murphy came to the field via European imperial and British Commonwealth history, areas in which he regularly taught courses in the Department of History. In 1960-61, in addition to a course in Australian and New Zealand history, he offered a two part course in Pacific history, the first dealing with the islands before 1799, and the second covering the period since then. The following academic year, a graduate seminar was added, dealing with "selected topics and research papers in the history of Oceania, with special emphasis on the British colonies." No record survives of the kind of issues which were isolated for intensive discussion in the seminar, nor of the books which were used as prescribed readings. Oral evidence suggests that there was more emphasis on the internal social and political dynamics of the islands societies themselves and less on European actors and their policies. The seminar remained on the books for the following decade, but in 1966, the two-part 500-level course was compressed into one, titled "History of Oceania".

Murphy retired from active teaching in the early 1970s, and his Pacific courses were taken over by Gavan Daws, himself the first Pacific history graduate of this university and now Professor of Pacific history in the Research School of Pacific Studies at the Australian National University. Colin Newbury, visiting from Oxford University, also offered courses in Pacific and Commonwealth history. Daws retained the earlier structure of course offerings largely because of his heavy involvement in the Department's World Civilizations program in which, by all accounts, he became a brilliant

success as a teacher. Daws resigned and left for Australia in the summer of 1975. He was replaced in 1976 by a graduate of ANU, Tim Macnaught, a Fijian specialist.

Macnaught taught Pacific Islands and world history regularly in the late 1970s. In 1980, in response to increasing student enrollments and the difficulties of teaching the entire history of the Pacific Islands in one course, he embarked on a major restructuring of the Pacific offerings, in addition to resurrecting the Australia and New Zealand courses from their previously dormant state. "History of Oceania" was once again split into two courses, Pacific Islands History I and II, the former dealing with the period from pre-contact to colonial times (about the 1870s) and the latter covering the period since then. He retained the Pacific History Seminar as a purely reading course and added another, Pacific Research Seminar, for advanced students interested in writing and research. As he put it, this seminar would "allow me to share the real business of detailed research with my own students in the stimulating environment of a small seminar of enthusiasts." He hoped to get his students to work on a selected topic - depopulation in the Pacific islands was mentioned as one possibility - and intended to publish the results in a book.

But that was not to be. A year after submitting these proposals, Macnaught left the university to take up the vice-principalship of St. Xavier College in Victoria, Australia, where, at this writing, he is still teaching. While Macnaught was away on leave during 1981, Ian Campbell from Adelaide University was invited to teach Pacific history courses in Spring 1981 as a visiting professor. But Campbell was deterred from taking up a permanent position in the Department by the all-too-familiar exorbitant cost of living

in Honolulu. However, the flagging spirit of a small coterie of Pacific history students was temporarily revived by the presence of Greg Denning, author of the masterful Islands and Beaches, who visited the Department of History as its Distinguished Burns Professor in Spring 1981. His lectures on "Native and Stranger: The bound-together history of kama'aina and haole in Polynesia" were a resounding success and helped to retrieve the study of Pacific history from the brink of possible oblivion. Ken Inglis, another Burns Chair holder from Australia, was also to perform with great distinction four years later.

Stewart Firth of Macquarie University in New South Wales arrived in the Fall of 1982 to take up the Pacific position in the Department of History. Firth was a prized catch, a highly respected scholar with a solid reputation as a teacher. But the Department's, and the students', hopes were soon dashed when, within months of being here, Firth gave notice of his resignation. The high cost of living in Honolulu had taken its toll once again.

Discouraged by the rapid turnover of its Pacific faculty and urged to reaffirm its long-standing commitment to the promotion of Pacific Islands history, the Department of History in 1983 appointed two Pacific historians, Dr. David Hanlon and myself to permanent positions. It was, we believe, a salutary move in the right direction! The presence of two full time Pacific faculty provided much-needed stability in the field, which led to a marked increase in student enrollments. It soon became evident that time was ripe for further expansion in our Pacific offerings. In 1985, we introduced a survey course at the 200 level. The Pacific History Seminar was divided into two separate courses, one dealing with Micronesian history taught by David and the other on the history of the South Pacific to be offered by me. It was a

division of labor which enabled us to capitalize on our respective research interests. The Pacific Research Seminar was retained in its original format as envisioned by Macnaught. With these changes now in place, we believe that an era in the evolution of Pacific Islands history at this university has come to an end; we now stand on the threshold of another, more optimistic one.

For me, trained as a research student in the Anglo-Australasian academic tradition, the system of graduate seminars was a novel and challenging experience which offered exciting prospects for intensive discussion of selected problems with knowledgeable and enthusiastic graduate students. For the first two years, I adopted the "great books" approach, discussing the major historical works in the field. In 1985, I decided to focus on a single region, and chose Melanesia as the seminar area. For 14 successive weeks, we examined diverse topics in Melanesian history: the theoretical and methodological issues involved; the debate about the pattern and pace of prehistoric settlement of the region; the nature of culture contact; the impact of European trading on indigenous social and economic systems; the experience of colonialisms; protest, war, decolonization and the dilemmas of independence. Each week students took turns leading the discussion. There was never a dull moment as the seminar frequently veered off in controversial directions, touching upon such issues as the politics and ethics of research in the islands and the relevance of the dichotomy between insider and outsider perspectives.

There were other moments of fun-filled discussion when history truly came alive. One session which stands out in my mind was the discussion of William Bell's murder in 1927 at Gwee'abe in the Solomons. The required reading for the session was Roger Keesing's and Peter Corris' brilliantly readable book,

Lightning Meets the West Wind. The seminar leader decided to hold a court of inquiry into the murder. He appointed himself the chief investigating officer and divided the class into two sections, one representing Bell and the other Basiana, the Kwaio ramo who murdered the district officer. Each side gave informed testimony about the character and temperament of the two protagonists, their respective social and cultural traditions, the history and nature of European penetration of Malaita, and the mounting Kwaio resentment against foreign encroachment on their way of life. At the end of three hours of "hearings" we were still uncertain about the real motivations behind Bell's murder, though the general social and historical context within which it took place became abundantly clear.

In addition to leading weekly discussions, the seminar participants were also required to submit written work for formal evaluation. They were given two alternatives: writing two book reviews and a long historiographical essay, or submitting a research paper based, as far as possible, on primary sources. About half the class, those who had little previous experience in historical research or those who wanted to broaden their knowledge of the literature, chose the former. Space has prevented us from including a sampling of these. Others who had a more focused research interest chose the research option. These contributions from those students who chose to proceed to the Pacific Research Seminar, are included in this volume.

The choice of research topics was left to the students themselves. In four of the five cases, these are or will be the subject of dissertations or theses. The five essays included here follow a rough chronological sequence. Roberta Sprague's paper on the Wilkes expedition to Fiji opens the collection. It focuses not so much on the goals and purposes of the mission -

about which much has been written in any case - but on what the explorers' records tell us about the aspects of Fijian society and politics at the time. This is not as easy a task as might be imagined for comments about the indigenous people are frustratingly sparse in the voluminous records of the expedition. As Roberta says: "It is easy to know what the Americans were thinking, for they recorded their thoughts voluminously. It is harder to determine what motivated the Fijians." This problem besets most researchers working on remoter periods in Pacific Islands history. But Roberta succeeds well in teasing out intriguing ethnographic comments from the records not only about the Fijian society but also about the perceptions and prejudices of the explorers themselves. Melanesians, among whom Fijians were included, came in for especially savage commentary. Horatio Hale, the ethnologist on the expedition, called them "sullen, sly, treacherous, indocile, stubborn, and of cold temperament." But the encounter was not always one-sided. "Both sides approached each other with curiosity and wariness," Roberta observes; "cross-cultural contact was an interesting melange of amusing adaptation, attempted manipulation, and, occasionally, hostile confrontation." This observation applies with much force to all other contributions in this volume.

In the second essay, Paul D'Arcy looks at the second stage of culture contact as exploring and trading ventures gave way to more protracted and intensive exchanges between the Europeans and the islanders. This period in Pacific Islands history is probably the most well researched; some of the best works in Pacific historiography are devoted to this era. The general consensus, by now an orthodoxy, is that culture contact was a dynamic and multifaceted affair. The "fatal impact" thesis, inspired by romantic travellers and self-interested missionaries, was turned on its head, perhaps

too precipitously, as Denning's account of Marquesan history suggests. In one case where the earlier observers were clearly wrong was in asserting the role of muskets in depopulating the islands where they were introduced in large numbers. The exaggeration in this contention has been exposed by K.R. Howe and Dorothy Shineberg, among others. Paul supports this revisionist view in his study of guns and warfare in late 19th century Malaita, a time frame which affords useful contrasts and comparisons with Shineberg's studies on an earlier period. The introduction of rifles did not cause a major social or demographic disruption in Malaitan society; on the contrary, Paul argues, guns were more important for their symbolic value – as seen, for example, in the case of the Kwaio ramo for whom the possession of firearms was a potent symbol of manhood. He sees significance in the fact that Basiana chose to use his musket as a club rather than as a firing weapon to kill William Bell. Even after the introduction of rifles, warfare was still conducted according to certain norms of ritual exchange, a point that Ron Adams makes in another context in his In The Land of Strangers (about Tanna). Paul concludes that despite improvements in firearms technology in the late 19th century, "the use of guns in indigenous fighting on Malaita was successfully modified to suit traditions towards warfare."

The importance of cultural continuity and the influence of traditional forces upon alien institutions and values is also emphasized by David Richardson in his essay on "Custom and the Cross on Tanna." He questions the view that political uprisings on Tanna were controlled by American libertarian groups keen to realize their dreams of a tax-free haven or inspired by descendants of French settlers anxious to avoid being dominated by the Anglophone majority. David emphasizes the role of indigenous forces, and



places particular emphasis on the islanders' opposition to the power and the influence of the Presbyterian church which attempted to eradicate many elements of kastom such as kava drinking, traditional dancing and initiation rites. By focusing on the 19th Century indigenous political dynamics in reaction to the impact of outside influences, David makes a strong case for his argument that in fact the French were manipulated by their allies in the struggle for cultural continuity, highlighting the many ironies involved in Vanuatu's history, and in contrast to those interpretations which suggest that the John Frum movement adherents were "helpless victims of cunning sophisticates from abroad." His examination of the John Frum movement as an example of traditionally-inspired, islander-oriented collection action has parallels in indigenous responses in the Solomons, Fiji, and other parts of Melanesia and elsewhere in the Pacific.

One of the most dramatic examples of an indigenous revolt took place in New Caledonia in 1878. That episode is invested with a great deal of symbolic significance by kanak nationalists today. Chantal Ferraro examines the aftermath of the revolt and the attempts made by the French colonial government to pacify the indigenous people in order to consolidate their political and economic position in the islands. The French settler attitude was articulated in its harshest form by Commander Testard in 1879: "... one must begin by destroying this population if one is to remain securely in the country. The only convenient way to come to an end, would be to organize hunting parties, like we do wolves in France, with several times a day at the beginning of the rainy season." Along with such violent campaigns of pacification, the government also embarked upon a scheme of colonisation libre, settlement of European families as cultivators in the nascent colony.

Land delimitation and the introduction of foreign laborers were two means, among others, to attain this end. Chantal paints a well researched and harrowing picture of French colonial repression in New Caledonia, and concludes: "There is no room for dissent in the French colonial system." To those wanting to get an insight into the intensity of the kanak struggle for independence today, this essay has much to offer. The struggle for independence in New Caledonia goes on, and with so much at stake for all the parties involved, the French government, the colons and the kanaks, it is difficult to know whether independence will come peacefully or through tragic, cataclysmic violence.

All non-French islands in Melanesia, however, have achieved independence, Fiji since 1970, Papua New Guinea since 1975, Solomons since 1978 and Vanuatu since 1980. With independence came new pressures and demands as island peoples and leaders began the process of working out their destinies themselves after a long period of colonial rule. Artists and intellectuals joined hands with others to meet the formidable challenges of nation-building as they examined and attempted to reconcile their pre-colonial and colonial heritage in poems, short stories, drama and other creative arts. Richard Hamasaki explores one facet of this phenomenon of literary revival in the independent nation of Papua New Guinea. His focus is on poetry and the poetic tradition in the colonial and the post-independence era. By examining the role and the work of such individuals as Allan Natachee, Ulli Bier, John Kasaipwalova and others, Richard demonstrates the dynamic and dialectical relationship between the social and political situation in PNG and the tone and content of the emerging creative literature. But he also attempts to understand the PNG situation in the larger context of the emerging Third World

Literature, especially in Africa. To this end, he examines the applicability of the Brash/Soyinka "theory" developed in the African context, to the PNG literary situation. Many problems, frustrations, impediments lie ahead for PNG poets and writers, and these will have to be faced with honesty and integrity. For in the words of John Kasaipwalova, authentic art will not be born until

I have ripped apart the house of my soul

To drag before my mirror my naked self.

The essays included in this volume, then, cover a wide range of topics - race relations, warfare, colonialism, resistance movements, the emergence of modern literature - reflecting the interests of the different contributors. They show that a variety of factors, both indigenous and exogenous to the area, need to be considered to get a fuller picture of the historical experience of the Pacific Islands peoples. They reflect, too, the incredible diversity and richness of Pacific Islands history as well as the rewards and problems involved in attempting to understand them. I found the essays included here a pleasure to read, and I hope that students and friends of the Pacific Islands will, too.

THE UNITED STATES EXPLORING EXPEDITION IN FIJI

Roberta Sprague

On May 9, 1840, with a showman's flair, Charles Wilkes led the four ships of the first United States Exploring Expedition smartly into Levuka harbor, off the Fijian island of Ovalau. Carrying full sail until the last moment, the ships came to anchor as the white uniformed crew scrambled aloft to strike sail and man the yards at attention. The onshore spectators welcomed them with a prolonged ovation.<sup>1</sup>

Wilkes, entranced by the beauty of the islands, was nevertheless mindful of their reputation in seafaring tales:

"So beautiful was their aspect, that I could scarcely bring my mind to the realizing sense of the well-known fact, that they were the abode of a savage, ferocious and treacherous race of cannibals."<sup>2</sup>

This visit marked the first official United States presence in Fiji, but it was far from the first experience between Americans and Fijians. Merchants and unofficial explorers from the United States had been in contact with the archipelago throughout the early part of the nineteenth century, particularly during the sandalwood rush which lasted until about 1815.

The published works concerning the Expedition or Fijian history do not deal with the significance of this American contact in terms of its consequences for Fijians or its indication for future American policy, or lack of it, in the area. Wilkes and the Expedition are discussed in a work by two Englishmen who were residents in Fiji at the time of his visit in Fiji and the Fijians<sup>3</sup> by Thomas Williams and James Calvert, published in 1859. They are also mentioned in the 1840 journal of missionary Thomas Cargill<sup>4</sup>, and in the narrative of Sir Edward Belcher<sup>5</sup>, in command of a British expedition in Fiji in that year. Other works of later periods which comment on the Exploring

Expedition's stay in Fiji are Stanley Brown's Men from Under the Sky<sup>6</sup>, and David Routledge's Matanitu.<sup>7</sup>

This paper, which relies largely on the narratives and journals published by the members of the Exploring Expedition, will examine this first official American contact with the Fijians in an attempt to explore the difficulties as well as the importance of the meeting of two very different cultures. The Exploring Expedition was in Fiji from May to August 1840. Obviously there is much to say both about Fiji and about the Expedition before and after this brief visit, but in the interest of staying within manageable limits other aspects will not be explored except as they give necessary understanding to the topic. Where contemporary sources disagree on names and dates, those given in Wilkes' Narrative have been used.<sup>8</sup>

Fiji and its inhabitants do not fall neatly into the descriptive categories used in other areas of the Pacific. The islands made up geologically of both coral and volcanic islands, were peopled, at the time of contact with the West, by a race similar to Melanesians in appearance, but possessing a culture more closely akin to that of Polynesia. Current archaeological and linguistic evidence offer some support for the theory that a proto-Polynesian race, which later went on to become Samoans and Tongans, became the first inhabitants of Fiji approximately 3500 years ago. The apparent genetic influence of Melanesia may have occurred after a long period of isolation in which the Polynesian culture developed sufficient strength to resist incursion, or the Melanesian influx may have taken place in small enough increments so the original culture was never overwhelmed, or both.<sup>9</sup> Older anthropological theories take the opposite approach: Fijians are a Melanesian population impacted by Polynesian culture.

The expedition's vessels were the first American naval ships in the island group which became known to Europeans following the voyage of Dutch explorer Abel Tasman in 1643. Tasman did not attempt to land. British explorer, Captain James Cook sighted Vatoa, or Turtle Island in 1774, but did not go ashore. Captain William Bligh passed through the archipelago after the Bounty mutineers set him adrift in the ship's launch in 1789. He sketched the islands as he passed them and fixed the location of each as well as he was able. He deliberately avoided making contact with the Fijians fearing a hostile reception and avoided notice, for the most part, by staying as far as possible from land. After Bligh's return to England, these charts, such as they were, were published. A few more islands were added to the charts following the voyages of James Wilson in the Duff in 1797 and Thaddeus von Bellingshausen in 1820. Merchant vessels and unofficial explorers, some of them American, began to make their way to Fiji, relying, when they had charts at all, on this partial and inadequate information.

As was often the case in early contacts between Polynesian and Western culture, conflict developed almost immediately over the concepts of private property. Fijians viewed anything which the wind and tide brought to their shores as a gift from the gods, intended for their benefit and use. Westerners, operating from a rigid 'mine and thine' outlook about their persons as well as their possessions, regarded islanders' attempts to take possession of their gods' gifts as thievery or savage, unprovoked, and unexplainable, aggression. When reports reached home port newspapers they were often about these conflicts. On August 29, 1797, The Albany Sentinel reported that the American ship Arthur fell in with an extensive group of islands, which from the latitude and longitude given in the report indicates

they were in Fiji. Captain Barber found the natives wary, uncomprehending of attempts to barter, though willing to accept presents on their first contact with the ship. They soon returned as a war party, shooting arrows and attempting to board. Barber fired his swivel guns, cut his cable and made an escape. He noted that the Fijians mistook his mens' muskets for clubs, and were driven off as much from fear at the sound of gunfire as efforts made by his crew.<sup>10</sup>

It was three more years before the first white men landed, unwillingly, on Fijian soil. These were the survivors of the brig Argo wrecked on a reef in the Lau group in 1800. They made their way to Oneata where many were killed coming ashore. A few were allowed to live and took up residence among the Fijians. One of them, Oliver Slater, noticed the Fijians using sandalwood to scent coconut oil which they rubbed on their bodies. Slater determined that they placed minor value on this fragrant wood, and would gladly trade it for items they valued more, such as iron, glass and red paint.<sup>11</sup> He managed to leave Fiji in a passing ship in 1802. Hoping to keep his discovery of sandalwood private information, when he reached New South Wales he confided only to the owner of a small schooner. Together they departed in secret for Fiji, returning to Port Jackson a few months later with a shipload of sandalwood which they sold for transshipment to China. Unfortunately for their hopes to reap a private fortune, the source of their sandalwood became waterfront gossip and several ships left for Fiji before Slater and his partner could refit for a second voyage.

The sandalwood rush was on. It was a violent and confusing period of cultural contact for both sides. The trade ceased as quickly as it began when the sandalwood was cut almost to extinction in 1815, but whalers and beche de

mer shippers continued to seek their quarry in Fijian waters. These contacts had the inevitable result of leaving behind some Western men, whose numbers were augmented by fugitives from the penal colony in New South Wales. Some allied themselves with Fijian chiefs, often giving assistance with armament and strategy in interdistrict wars. Some choose to live in their own colony, which under the unofficial leadership of American expatriate David Whippy, maintained friendly relations with the Fijians and made themselves useful as mediators between Fijians and foreign ships.

Throughout the first half of the nineteenth century newspapers on the Eastern seaboard of the United States carried reports of sailors killed in Fiji and the casualties of navigation in Fijian waters here no adequate charts had been published. The decision by the Congress of the United States to support a naval exploring expedition was in part a response to the pressure of the seagoing merchants of the time for governmental assistance in eliminating some of the hazards they confronted in this part of the world.

In the period before Western contact, Fiji did not live in isolation in the south seas, but maintained extensive contact with Tonga. Groups of Fijians lived in Tonga, while far larger groups of Tongans made up the majority of residents on some of the islands of eastern Fiji. An important attraction for the Tongans was the availability of trees suitable for canoes. Wilkes reported that Tongans were building war canoes for Fijians as well as themselves and exploiting the leverage in Fijian politics which this gave them. Fijians had learned about the western world from their Tongan neighbors. They also acquired some western goods in this fashion before the Argo survivors came ashore.



Christianity was brought to Fiji in 1830 by Tongans when they introduced two Tahitian Christians who preached under the auspices of the London Missionary Society. In 1835 the Tongans brought to Fiji two English missionaries from the Wesley Methodist Missionary Society: William Cross and David Cargill. They and their families had been serving in Tonga. This small contingent of British citizens landed at Lakeba, where their Tongan escorts introduced them as friends and exhorted the Fijians to treat them well. The Fijians treated them indifferently at best. Three more missionaries, Burdsall Lyth, John Hunt and James Calvert had arrived by 1840, but none of them felt in a very secure situation, nor had they had much success in converting Fijians to Christianity.

The men of the Exploring Expedition, and the inhabitants of the Fijian archipelago brought to their encounter with each other, attitudes conditioned by previous experiences and information. Fijians knew the Western world first by hearsay from their Tongan neighbors, later from contacts with castaways, merchant voyagers, beachcombers and missionaries. Reports from American sailors and British missionaries had informed opinion in the United States. Both sides approached each other with curiosity and wariness. Cross-cultural contact was an interesting melange of amusing adaptation, attempted manipulation, and, occasionally, hostile confrontation. This paper is an attempt to look at this contact in the context of the cultural biases which were operating and to determine if it had significant consequences for Fiji or the United States. It is easy to know what the Americans were thinking, for they recorded their thoughts voluminously. It is harder to determine what motivated the Fijians. This can be derived from an occasional insightful

comment made by the writers of the events against a background of Fijian history and customs.

Among the lengthy and specific orders with which the Expedition sailed were instructions to explore and survey the South Pacific including a charge to

...proceed to the Feejee Islands which you will examine with particular attention with the view to the selection of a safe harbour, easy of access, and in every respect adapted to the reception of vessels of the United States engaged in the whale-fishery, and general commerce of the seas, it being the intention of the government to keep one of the squadron of the Pacific cruising near these islands in the future. After selecting the islands and harbours best adapted to the purposes in view, you will use your endeavors to make such arrangements as will ensure a supply of fruits, vegetables and fresh provisions, to vessels visiting it hereafter, teaching the natives the modes of cultivation, and encouraging them to raise hogs in greater abundance.<sup>12</sup>

The expedition was "not for conquest, but discovery...to extend the empire of commerce and science."<sup>13</sup> Wilkes was not to interfere with the indigenous people nor "to take part in their disputes, except as a mediator; nor commit any act of hostility unless in self-defense or to protect or secure the property of those under your command."<sup>14</sup> In his dealings with natives Wilkes was further instructed "to display neither arrogance nor contempt and appeal to their good will rather than their fears, until it shall become obvious that they can only be restrained by fear or force."<sup>15</sup>

The American Congress passed the Act establishing the exploring Expedition on May 18, 1836. It was expected that the ships would be ready to sail early in 1837. Naval hero Commodore Thomas ap Catesby Jones was placed in charge and solicited advice from American intellectuals, most notably the American Philosophical Society, about scientific objectives to be accomplished. A very junior Navy Lieutenant, Charles Wilkes, was given the responsibility of procuring the instruments needed to carry out these tasks. A number of noted

scientists were engaged to sail with the Expedition, but delays, disputes and disorganization brought about changes of personnel and other frustrations, finally resulting in the resignation of Jones as commander. Various senior naval officers refused the opportunity to get the Expedition underway. On March 20, 1838, the job was offered to the forty year old Wilkes. His acceptance was accompanied by a large outcry over his junior status. Wilkes did not add to his popularity by dismissing many of the scientists previously engaged, nor by his persistent pressure to depart, it seemed to some of his officers, ready or not.

The expedition sailed on August 18, 1838 from Norfolk, Virginia, in the presidency of Martin Van Buren. The "scientifics" aboard were two naturalists, a philologist-ethnologist (linguist-anthropologist in more modern terms), a conchologist, a mineralogist, a horticulturist, a botanist and two draftsmen to illustrate specimens in addition to the unique scenes and people which the Expedition expected to encounter. Naval officers were to do scientific work in the fields of hydrography, geography, astronomy, terrestrial magnetism and meteorology.

Six vessels departed on the expedition. The two largest were Wilkes' flagship Vincennes and the Peacock, under Lt. William Hudson. The brig Porpoise was about half the size of the flagship. Tenders Seagull and Flying Fish were small, about one-quarter the size of the Vincennes. The supply vessel Relief, slightly smaller than the Peacock, was built for capacity, not speed. The Seagull was lost with all hands in a storm off Cape Horn. The slowness of the supply ship proved to be the source of such delay that Wilkes transferred most of the supplies to the other ships and ordered the Relief

detached from the squadron to return home by way of the Sandwich Islands and Sydney depositing the remainder of its cargo at these ports.

Wilkes, with the remaining four ships, sailed into the South Pacific from Callao, Peru in July 1839. The Expedition crossed to Australia surveying and exploring in the Tuamotus, Society Islands, and Samoa. A portion of the Expedition fleet departed Sydney in December 1839 for explorations in Antarctica, where a land mass was discovered which remains called by the name the commander gave it, Wilkes Land. Rejoining the remainder of his squadron, Wilkes led the Expedition into the South Pacific for a second time, stopping at New Zealand and Tonga before arriving in Fiji.

Wilkes determined before leaving Tonga to make his first anchorage off Ovalau because of its central location in the archipelago, and because of the reported availability of American expatriate, David Whippy, to interpret and assist in relations with the Fijians.

After the fleet had anchored, Whippy, who had lived in Fiji eighteen years, came off in a small boat to greet Wilkes. Having determined Wilkes' intentions, he returned shortly with Tui Levuka, principal chief of Ovalau, including the harbor area, who was generous in accommodating Wilkes's request for a piece of land to use to set up an observatory on shore. Wilkes selected a site "upon a projecting, insulated point, about thirty feet above the beach, on which was sufficient room to accommodate our tents and houses."<sup>16</sup> In addition it had a few acres of ground for a garden, which was to be well-fenced and placed under the direction of William D. Brackenridge, the horticulturalist. On May 11 the instruments and tents were put on shore and erected.

The surprise of the natives was extremely great to find a village or town as they called it, erected in a few hours, and everything in order: the guards on post to prevent their intrusion most excited their curiosity.<sup>17</sup>

Fencing the garden illustrated differing cultural expectations. In this instance the visitors made the adjustment.

"About twenty natives were employed in putting up a fence, the chief (Tui Levuka) having agreed with each of them to make two fathoms of it...Mr. Brackenridge marked out the line for the fence but they could not be induced to follow it, each individual making his allotted part according to his own fancy; these separate portions were afterward joined together by a species of *Dolichos* [a vine] crossed, braced and wattled like basketwork, the whole thing making a tight fence, which answered the purpose well enough."<sup>18</sup>

Levuka, in 1840, was one of the districts on Ovalau which declared its allegiance to the island of Bau off the coast of Viti Levu. As guns and men who knew how to use them had infiltrated Fiji in the post-contact years, ambitious chiefs found ways to employ them to increase their tributary domains. One of the most successful of these chiefs was based on Bau. He kept steady pressure on his opponents and a tight rein on his followers until his district became one of the largest and most important in the area. At his death his brother Tanoa succeeded him somewhat unwillingly. Lacking the ability of his predecessor, Tanoa was unable to resist a coup from within his own group. He was exiled from Bau, but his youthful son, Seru, or Cakobau as he became known to history, was allowed to remain. Seru engineered a counter-coup in 1837 restoring his father to authority in Bau. It is a matter of some speculation why Seru did not seize power in name as well as in fact at this point. There is general agreement that it was a matter of strategy rather than filial devotion. When Wilkes and the Exploring Expedition arrived Tanoa was 'king' of Bau and as such dealt with the Americans.

Wilkes decided to attempt a feat of political one-upmanship in his first meeting with Tanoa.

I directed the Chief, Tui Levuka, to send a message immediately to Ambau, to inform King Tanoa of my arrival, and desire him to visit me. This was at once assuming authority over him, and after the fashion (as I understood) of the country; but it was doubted by some whether he would come, as he was old, and a powerful chief. I thought the experiment was worth trying, as, in case he obeyed, it would be considered that he acknowledged me as his superior, which I thought might be beneficial in case of any difficulty occurring during our stay; I believed, moreover, that it would greatly add to the respect which the natives would hold us in.<sup>19</sup>

Whether the possibility of political advantage, curiosity or some other motive prompted Tanoa, he sailed into Levuka harbor on May 12 in a canoe which Wilkes deemed suitably majestic and admirably handled.

It was a fit accompaniment to the magnificent scenery around; it was a single canoe, one hundred feet in length, with an outrigger of large size, ornamented with a great number (two thousand and five hundred) of the *Cypraea ovula* shells. Its velocity was almost inconceivable, and everyone was struck with the adroitness with which it was managed and landed on the beach.<sup>20</sup>

Tanoa's attendants were "generally Tonga men, forty of whom had the direction and sailing of his canoe."<sup>21</sup> Shortly after Tanoa's arrival a large double canoe carrying two Tongan chiefs and about 500 followers sailed into the harbor. The chiefs told Wilkes that they had been visiting Tanoa when Wilkes' request for an interview arrived and decided to visit him also. They were canoe builders, they said, who were living in the eastern Lau islands constructing vessels for themselves and the Fijians.

Upon his arrival at Levuka Tanoa, as the tributary chief, was honored with ceremonies in the council house. At their conclusion he dispatched Whippy to inform Wilkes, in case it had escaped his notice, that he was in Levuka. If this was a summons to appear in the royal presence, Wilkes was again one up.

He sent a junior officer to pay his respects to Tanoa and say that a boat from the Vincennes would call for him on the following morning.

Whatever his opinion of Wilkes' grasp of Fijian etiquette, Tanoa, together with several Fijian and Tongan chiefs, was conveyed to the flagship the next day. A large Tongan canoe followed the royal party to the ship. The 'king', came on board to face several surprises.

When he reached the deck he was evidently much astonished, particularly when he saw the marines, with their muskets, presenting arms, and so many officers...the novel sight, to him, of my large Newfoundland dog, Sydney, who did not altogether like the sable appearance of his majesty, the noise of the drum and the boatswain's pipe combined to cause him some alarm, and he evinced a disposition to retire, keeping himself close to the ship's side.<sup>22</sup>

Wilkes' tone is amused, but he seems favorably impressed with Tanoa whom he describes as a hairy, small-framed man of about 65 years, with European rather than negroid features and noted "his countenance was indicative of intelligence and shrewdness; his mind is said to be quite active," although, curiously, "he speaks through his nose, or rather, as if he had lost his palate."<sup>23</sup> One of Wilkes' officers, Lt. George Colvocoresses, remarked that he had such "a great speech impediment...that there are few persons who can understand him."<sup>24</sup> Wilkes' purpose in meeting with Tanoa was to persuade him to agree to the adoption of "rules and regulations for the intercourse with foreign vessels, similar to those established in the Samoan group in the year preceding."<sup>25</sup> [See appendix] Wilkes, ever the moralist, suspected something more than cultural surprise was affecting the old man, since at the beginning of the discussion about the agreements to be adopted.

Tanoa seemed rather confused and at first appeared dull and stupid; this imputed to his awa drinking, in which they had all indulged to excess the night before. He did not seem to comprehend the object of them. This is not to be wondered at, when it is considered that this was the first act of the kind he had been called upon to do.<sup>26</sup>

One of the Tongan chiefs "being a traveler of some note"<sup>27</sup> did understand the intent of these papers and explained them to Tanoa's satisfaction. He gave his consent to this agreement and made it official by making his mark on them the following day. Wilkes was not optimistic about their utility.

Although I did not anticipate much immediate good from these regulations, yet I was satisfied they would be of use in restraining the natives as well as masters of ships, and in securing a better understanding between them; at any rate, it was a beginning, and would make them feel we were desirous of doing them justice. I talked to him much, through an interpreter, of the necessity of protecting the whites, and of punishing those who molest and take from them their goods in case of shipwreck. He listened to me very patiently and said 'he had always done so; that my advice was very good, but he did not need it; that I must give plenty of it to his son Seru, and talk hard to him; that he would in a short time be king and need it.'<sup>28</sup>

Wilkes had originally planned to host a 'feast' (consisting of rice-bread and molasses) on board the Vincennes but Tanoa's party including Tongans was too large to accommodate so he arranged to have it served on shore. After a three hour visit on board, the royal party went ashore to enjoy it.

In this early part of his stay Wilkes was intrigued by the Fijians and thought they were more interesting than the Tongans. "It was pleasant to look upon the Tonguese, but I felt more interest in the Feejees; the contrast was somewhat like that observable between a well-bred gentleman and a boor."<sup>29</sup> As for the Fijians impressions, Tanoa was reported to have commented that Wilkes' "men might be good warriors, but they walked very much like Muscovy ducks."<sup>30</sup>

Tanoa returned to the Vincennes for an informal visit the following day. Wilkes entertained him by showing him some mercury, 'silvering' a button for him and being entertained himself by Tanoa's attempts to pick up a piece of the fluid metal and noting "his actions resembled those of a monkey."<sup>31</sup>

The two men returned to the business of the previous day.



He talked a great deal of the regulations he had signed. I was desirous of knowing whether he fully understood them, which I found he did. I then asked him if it would not be better for his son Seru to sign them also, as he is understood to be the acting chief; he said 'no' that his signature was quite sufficient, and made them binding on all the dependencies of Ambau. He desired me when his son Seru paid me a visit, to talk to him and give him plenty of good advice, for he was a young man and frisky; but he himself was old and saw things that were good and bad.<sup>32</sup>

Wilkes later took Seru aboard the Vincennes, and, as requested, "gave him plenty of good advice to which he seemed to pay great attention" a circumstance which surprised Wilkes as he

had been told he would probably exhibit hauteur and an arrogant bearing, but he manifested nothing of the kind. He appeared rather, as I had been told by his father I would find him, 'young and frisky'. On the whole I was very much pleased with him during his visit...<sup>34</sup>

Seru perhaps was on his good behavior for the leader of this impressive squadron since "shortly afterward, he, however, visited the ship during my absence, and displayed a very different bearing, so much so as to require to be checked."<sup>35</sup>

One of Wilkes' first actions at Levuka was to lead his officers on a hike to the top of the Ovalau mountains. Whippy, some other residents of the beach community and several Fijian guides made up the rest of the hiking party. On the climb Wilkes noted the Fijians making leaf offerings beside the trail. Upon inquiring he was told that each offering was made where a man had been clubbed. "Judging from the number of places in which these atonements were made, many victims have suffered in this way."<sup>36</sup> The hikers left early in the morning, thinking to reach the top of the mountain, make their observations and return before dark. Wilkes observed,

I have seldom witnessed a party so helpless as ours appeared, in comparison with natives and white residents who ran over the rocks like goats. Darkness overtook us before we reached the town; many of the natives, however, brought torches of dried coconut leaves to

light us on our way, and we reached our respective ships without accident, though much fatigued.<sup>37</sup>

Wilkes' reported his two Fijian escorts occasionally "took me under the arms and where necessary lifted me from rock to rock."<sup>38</sup> He attributed the safe return of the American hikers not to Whippy's influence with Tui Levuka, but rather to the "bearing and fearlessness shown by the party."<sup>39</sup> As Wilkes was to learn later, to appear helpless in Fiji, was to invite attack. Indeed, Whippy's warnings had prompted him to order that officers who left the ship for any purpose were to be armed. His orders on this matter state

the least degree of confidence reposed in the natives was attended with great risk, and that so treacherous a people were not to be trusted in any circumstances.<sup>40</sup>

Wilkes ordered Hudson and the Peacock to Rewa on May 16. He was to obtain the signature of the 'king of Rewa' Tui Dreketi, on the same rules and regulations which Tanoa had signed on behalf of Bau. In this era Rewa, on the south side of Viti Levu, was the other principal chiefdom whose hegemony over the surrounding districts was limited only by the power of Bau to oppose it. Tui Dreketi had the misfortune to have several half-brothers three of whom felt equally entitled to the position which he currently occupied. They were Cokanauto, whom Hudson and company knew as Mr. Phillips, Qaraniqio, and Veidovi.

Hudson's first order of business was to pay a visit to Tui Dreketi. The chief ordered food brought for his guests and after the feast a fingerbowl and water jar were brought for the royal ablutions and were also used by the visiting diners

to the evident distress of the attendant. It was afterward understood that his anxiety arose from the vessel being tabooed as everything belonging or appropriated to the use of the king is.<sup>41</sup>

Hudson and party spent the night at Tui Dreketi's where Hudson was surprised by one of the king's wives "...endeavoring to become his bedfellow. This was to him an unexpected adventure, and an honour of which he was not ambitious."<sup>42</sup> Hudson tried to discourage her but she insisted she had been sent by the king, who would put her to death if she did not do as commanded. Hudson then protested to the king, who ordered her to depart.

The following day the Tui Dreketi and his party came aboard the Peacock with Missionary David Cargill whom Hudson had enlisted as a translator during the treaty negotiations. The rules and regulations were explained and they agreed to adopt them. In celebration of the occasion Hudson put on an American-style celebration that evening which Wilkes recounts in his Narrative.

About nine o'clock the fireworks were exhibited. When the first rocket was sent off, the natives exhibited fear and excitement, the king seized Captain Hudson by the hand and trembled like a leaf. When the rockets burst and displayed their many stars, they all seemed electrified. The effect produced by the blue-lights on the dark groups of naked figures, amazed and bewildered as they were, was quite striking, particularly as the spectacle was accompanied by the uncouth sounds of many conchs, and by the yell of the savages, to drive away the spirits they supposed to be let loose and flying in the air...This exhibition excited the wonder and amazement of all the country round, and induced them to believe these flying spirits were collected for the destruction of Rewa, and that they themselves would be the next to suffer.<sup>43</sup>

Hudson engaged Cokanauto as an interpreter and pilot while he was at Rewa. Wilkes described him as a rather equivocal character, who called himself the white man's friend, and was ashamed of his reputation among the whites as a former cannibal. Still he seemed

certainly one of the most intelligent natives I have met with in all Polynesia...unfortunately has not sufficient knowledge to distinguish between good and evil. He visits all the vessels that touch at this group, and says he passes most of his time on board of them.<sup>44</sup>

Phillips, the name he used in his dealings with foreigners, became closely associated with the Expedition during its stay. Several of Hudson's officers

stayed at his house while he was away leading a party of the explorers. Dinner there was not exactly what they had expected as "...the supper table was laid with a cloth, dishes, plates, knives and forks, and they were waited on by a white steward (an Italian)".<sup>45</sup> They must have pondered what sort of impression they were making on their hosts since they reported an extremely noisy gathering that evening as Cokanauto's wife

...did not possess the requisite authority to maintain order...about fifty persons, men, women and children were collected, feasting, drinking awa, and maintaining a prodigious racket. They were apparently engaged in detailing and discussing the events that had taken place on board ship, and the narrative was constantly interrupted by jokes, laughter, expressions of astonishment and arguments leading to sharp words.<sup>46</sup>

While the Peacock was at Rewa, Hudson received a message from Wilkes to arrest one of the Tui Dreketi's half-brothers, Veidovi, as the leader responsible for the seizure of the American brig, Charles Doggett six years earlier and the murder of five of its crew. This information was imparted to Wilkes by Whippy, his Levuka guide, intermediary and translator. Hudson was surprised at this command since Veidovi had assisted the Expedition by guiding one of the exploring parties on a trip up the Rewa river. Since the entire chiefly clan had been invited to visit the Peacock on May 21 the arrest did not seem as though it would present any difficulty. On the appointed day, the rest of the party came on board, but by four o'clock Veidovi had not made an appearance. Hudson decided to hold the rest of the chiefs hostage until he could find him. This turn of events frightened those Fijians whose departure was prohibited.

The poor queen was apparently the most alarmed and anxiously inquired of Phillips if they were all to be put to death. Phillips was equally frightened with the rest, and it was observed that his nerves were so much affected for some time afterward that he was unable to light a cigar that was given him, and could not speak distinctly.<sup>47</sup>

Hudson made an effort to reassure them of their safety and provided entertainment for them throughout the night. The royal party eventually recovered its equilibrium. They told Hudson that Veidovi was "a dangerous character among themselves; and that they would be glad to see him removed." Tui Dreketi tried a little power politics of his own, expressing fear for the missionaries on shore when the people of Rewa discovered that their royal family was held hostage on the American ship. But he did not succeed as "Capt. Hudson...well knew this was a ruse on the part of the king."<sup>48</sup> Hudson had to devise a plan to get the wanted man aboard.

It was shortly arranged that Ngaraningiou and another chief should go quietly to Rewa, take Vendovi by surprise, before he had time to escape, and bring him on board alive if possible. The selection of Ngaraningiou as the emissary to capture the murderer was well-timed, as Vendovi had always been his rival, and the temptation to get rid of so powerful an adversary was an opportunity not to be lost by a Feegee man, although that adversary was a brother.<sup>49</sup>

Qaraniqio and Veidovi appeared at the Peacock the following morning. The accused man acknowledged his guilt and Hudson informed him that he intended to take him to America as a prisoner. Tui Dreketi agreed

that Capt. Hudson had done right; that he would like to go to America himself, they had all been treated so well, that we were now all good friends, and that he should ever continue to be a good friend to all white men.<sup>50</sup>

Veidovi's decision to surrender was viewed with approbation if not relief by many of his compatriots. Cargill informed Hudson that the "chiefs were fully sensible that it was just that Vendovi should be punished."<sup>51</sup> He wrote in his journal on May 22 that

Veidovi was in irons. He acknowledged that his crime was great, and that he merited punishment. Capt. Hudson informed me that he intended to take him to America to show him many of the vessels of war, that he might form an idea of the extent of the power of the Americans in punishing those who kill or molest the crews of any of

their vessels. He wished also to introduce him to Missionary Societies, to teach him Christianity and to imbue his mind with the love of virtue.

Later a chief of Kadavu, "after making inquiry about Vendovi, ...said that the people of Kantavu were glad he had been taken away, for he was continually making exactions on them for all kinds of articles..."<sup>52</sup> One who was not pleased was the British expedition leader Belcher who observed sourly on hearing the news that Veidovi had been taken prisoner,

it is said he will be taken to America, but what they can do with him is very problematical. In consequence of this affair our reception was anything but flattering. Owing to the threats that vengeance would be taken for the capture of the chief by the Peacock, I did not conceive it right to risk the chance of aggression, by permitting our parties to pursue their examinations where our force could not act; consequently, beyond the island of Nukulau and the beach-line, little was obtained...the abstraction of the Rewa chief by the Americans has irritated the natives amazingly, and will probably injure their mercantile interests.<sup>53</sup>

It seems unlikely, however, that the Expedition could have 'abstracted the Rewa chief' without his cooperation and that of his brothers. Indeed two attempts were made to capture a Samoan chief who was guilty of a similar offense, but he disappeared into the mountains when the ships arrived and was never taken.<sup>54</sup> Understandably Tui Dreketi might have been relieved to have a potential rival for his position removed from the islands, as might his two other brothers. Qaraniqio went to 'capture' Veidovi on the afternoon of May 21, spent the night with him, and the two of them appeared at the Peacock the following day. It appears possible that his decision to 'surrender' was motivated by the Rewa chiefs attempt to gain some advantage by close association with the American expedition. Cokanauto's full-time occupation was to make himself useful to any foreign vessel appearing in Fiji. The rival chiefdom of Bau had gained much strength by using the weapons, men and

strategies which contact with foreigners offered it. Rewa had had some success in the same manner. Perhaps by actually sending one of its members to participate in the Western world, the chiefly family hoped to reap even greater benefits. Whippy's motive in incriminating Veidovi in a six-year old massacre is questionable. He might have invoked this punishment to make white men, especially American ones, safer and more powerful in Fiji, or he could have been intriguing as a close associate of Tui Levuka, Tanoa and Seru to weaken a rival chiefdom by depriving it of a leader who had proved able to take decisive and aggressive action. Whatever might have resulted from Veidovi's contact with America, however, was cancelled by his death from tuberculosis four days after the end of the expedition in 1842.

While the motivation which prompted Whippy and the Fijians may be unclear, there is no doubt that the British missionaries with whom the Americans came in contact promoted their own interests through association with the Exploring Expedition. The ties of Christianity apparently overcame any national differences. Wilkes, when writing about any people of the Pacific, consistently maintained that missionary influence was beneficial. His comments on the Fijians reveal this perspective.

Although, as we shall see, the natives of Fiji have made considerable progress in several of the useful arts, they are, in many respects the most barbarous and savage race now existing upon the globe. The intercourse they have had with white men has produced some effect on their political condition, but does not appear to have had the least influence in mitigating the barbarous ferocity of their character. In this group, therefore, may be seen the savage in his state of nature; and a comparison of his character with that of the natives of the groups in which the gospel has been profitably preached, will enable our readers to form a better estimate of the value of missionary labors, than can well be acquired in any other manner.<sup>55</sup>

Wilkes greatly admired the missionaries and sympathized with the difficult conditions in which they labored. Citing the opposition of the chiefs he commented

The missionaries have made but slow advancement in their work, and there is but little to be expected as long as the people remain under their present chiefs, for they dare not do anything but what they allow them...It is not to be supposed, under this state of things, that success of the missionaries will be satisfactory, or adequate to their exertions, or a sufficient recompense for their hardships, deprivations and struggles which they and their families have to encounter. There are few situations in which these devoted and pious individuals are placed; and nothing but a deep sense of duty, and a strong determination to perform it, could induce civilized persons to subject themselves to the sight of such horrid scenes as they are called upon almost daily to witness.<sup>56</sup>

Cargill, while translating at the meeting between Hudson and the Rewa chiefs, took the opportunity to complain to Hudson that dwelling houses which the chiefs had promised the missionaries had never been built. On May 18 he wrote in his journal about the meeting between Hudson and the chiefs

He treated them with great kindness and gave each of them a liberal present. He fired off two large guns. The natives were surprised at their power and the distance to which the balls were thrown. He spoke to the king about erecting our houses. I exhorted him to abandon heathenism and listen to instructions. He reproached the king's brother for improper conduct to the missionaries. His behavior towards them will, I have no doubt, make a deep and beneficial impression on their minds.

Though they had been stalling Cargill for months, the chiefs soon did as Hudson requested. On May 27 the missionary recorded in his journal that the people of a nearby village had come to build his house. Hudson noted that the natives engaged in the project were "...gay and merry, though busily engaged at their work."<sup>57</sup> Tragically, Mrs. Cargill and her newborn baby died a few days after construction began. Cargill and five surviving children departed for England shortly thereafter without occupying the long-awaited dwelling.



When Wilkes, temporarily aboard the Porpoise, called at Somu-somu to get the chiefs to sign his rules and regulations, he found missionaries John Hunt and Burdsall Lyth and their wives nervous about hostilities that were apparently brewing with the Vuna people, since, as they related, all strangers residing within the village limits are in time of war considered as enemies and subject to plunder. 'King' Tui Illa-illa was away at Vanua Levu gathering warriors, so Wilkes had a talk with his father, old Tui Cakau.

"I distinctly told the king, that neither the missionaries, nor any other white men must be hurt; that if it ever occurred, or if he touched a hair of their heads, he might rely on it, that sooner or later, punishment would come upon him. I urged upon him for his own sake, the necessity of taking care that no harm should come to them or their families, and spoke of the necessity of giving them ground, and building them a house without the limits of town.<sup>58</sup>

Wilkes and his men did favors large and small for the missionaries. The purser of the Vincennes passed along fifteen colonial newspapers to Cargill. Though they were several months old, he was shocked to read the 'melancholy intelligence' of the death of missionary leader John Williams in the New Hebrides. Missionary John Hunt was transported from Levuka to Somu-somu in the Vincennes. On June 25 Cargill recorded in his journal, "...I received a letter from Mr. Waldron, the purser of the Vincennes, informing me that he had purchased a portion of land from the chief of Levuka on Ovalau." The land was presented to the mission with a request that a missionary be sent to Ovalau as soon as possible. This interest and sponsorship by the Americans contrasted sharply to the action of Belcher who refused Cargill's desperate request to have the ship's doctor call on his dying wife. Two junior British officers were given grudging permission to attend her funeral two days later.

When, on June 10 Wilkes tried to get the Somu-somu chiefs on board ship for a signing of the treaty he ran into difficulty for he found that "...no

inducement could persuade them to place themselves in our power, for fear of a like detention with Vendovi."<sup>59</sup> A council was consequently held ashore at the king's house, where Wilkes noted "...he also possessed a chair, two chests and several muskets. The former he seemed to take much pleasure sitting in, having discovered, as he told the interpreter, that they were very comfortable for an old man."<sup>60</sup>

By the middle of June the men of the Expedition were beginning to lose whatever interest they may have had in the Fijians. Speaking of the 'king of Lakeba, Tui Nayau', Wilkes observed "...he is a corpulent, nasty-looking fellow, and has the unmitigated habits of a savage." Furthermore "the settlement is dirty and badly built, but has some large houses. In it were seen numbers of ugly women and children."<sup>61</sup>

...officers again visited the king, Tui Nayau, at his house; which is really very little better than a large pig-pen. He appeared to be too fat to be able to exert himself. He is about the middle size as to height, slovenly in his person and habits, with a dull-looking countenance, childish in his behavior, and has been found to be mean and niggardly in his disposition.<sup>62</sup>

Hudson took the treaty to Bua where he had to mediate in a local squabble between two rival chiefs before he could persuade them to sign. Wilkes noted, however, that the Fijian chiefs always signed the agreements "...saying they were glad to enter into them, and they should be strictly observed by their people."<sup>63</sup> But he also commented the "they are very quick in discerning what will please those whom they wish to conciliate, and readily accede to their views."<sup>64</sup>

Relations between the Americans and the Fijians took a definite turn for the worse with the capture of a cutter and her crew which had been stranded on a reef in Solevu Bay off Vanua Levu. The Fijians released the crew, but kept the cutter. Wilkes, with Whippy interpreting, set out to retrieve it, laying

down the following conditions: the boat and everything in the boat must be returned or punitive action would be taken. When the boat was returned, stripped, Wilkes was annoyed.

My conditions not being complied with, I determined to make an example of these natives, and to show them that they could no longer hope to commit acts of this description without receiving punishment.<sup>65</sup>

Wilkes had earlier in his Narrative indicated an understanding of the Fijian point of view that

...any canoe or vessel, whether native or foreign, when driven on shore is accounted an offering to the gods. All that it contains is considered as belonging to the chief of the district where the accident happens.<sup>66</sup>

This did not prevent him from landing an expedition party and burning the village. The natives offered no resistance, perhaps feeling a few huts were a cheap price to pay for the items that were seized. Wilkes nevertheless felt his actions were justified and effective.

The infliction of this punishment I deemed necessary; it was efficiently and promptly done, and, without the sacrifices of any lives, taught these savages a salutary lesson.<sup>67</sup>

The need to be constantly on the defensive seemed to be wearing on Wilkes' nerves.

It was by no means pleasant to be constantly feeling that if one of us should straggle, he might be kidnapped and taken off to furnish a cannibal feast. This constant necessity of keeping one's guard for fear of surprise was not a little harrassing, and made my anxieties for the parties very great. The more knowledge I obtained of the natives, the less disposed was I to trust them.<sup>68</sup>

Finally the worst happened. Two crew members, one of them Wilkes' nephew, were killed while bargaining with the Fijians on the beach at Malolo island. They had gone ashore over-confident of the islanders' friendship and practically unarmed. Just as Wilkes was finishing the last of the surveying about five miles east of Malolo three small Expedition boats approached,

"colours at half-mast, union down." On reaching Wilkes they informed him that "a horrid massacre had but a short hour before taken place." Wilkes returned to his ship where he "saw the mutilated and bleeding bodies of Lieutenant Joseph A. Underwood and my nephew Midshipman Wilkes Henry."<sup>69</sup>

Wilkes and his men were in no mood to countenance a philosophical interpretation of Fijian behavior.

The blood of the slain imperatively called for retribution and the honor of our flag demanded that the outrage upon it should not remain unpunished.

The dead were buried on a small island near Malolo,

far enough removed from these condor-eyed savages to permit them to be entombed in the earth, without risk of exhumation, although there was no doubt that our movements were closely watched from the highest peaks. I could not but feel a melancholy satisfaction in having it in my power to pay them these last sad duties, and that their bodies had been rescued from the shambles of these odious cannibals.<sup>71</sup>

Wilkes then undertook to teach the Malolo islanders a lesson. Seventy officers and men went ashore on a mission to destroy all the houses and plantations and kill all the men. Yaro, the first village they reached, was deserted. They burned it without resistance, towed away and destroyed all the canoes. They guessed, correctly, that all the warriors had gone to the island's other village, Solevu, and all the non-combatant men, women, children and movable property had been removed into the mountains.

This fact shows that the islanders were not ignorant of the consequences that were likely to follow the murder of our officers, and had made timely preparations to resist our attack on one of the towns, and save themselves from serious loss at the other.<sup>72</sup>

As the attacking party approached the second village, the chief came out to plead that his village had not been involved in the attack. He indicated his willingness to give Wilkes some pigs as a peace offering. Wilkes was not interested in peace offerings and proceeded to attack. He was not too

distracted to notice some indigenous peculiarities about the Fijian fighting methods.

The natives...had, in addition to their arrows, clubs, spears and muskets; but the latter were so unskillfully handled as to do little damage, for they as I had been informed was their practice, put charges into them according to the size of the person they intended to shoot at. They believe that it requires a larger load to kill a large man than it does a small one. The bows and arrows were for the most part used by the women...Now was seen what many of those present had not before believed, the expertness with which these people dodge a shot at the flash of a gun.<sup>73</sup>

The following morning a young woman with a white rooster stood on the shore opposite Wilkes' ship. She had with her, in addition, some of the personal effects of the slain men. Wilkes suspected, but was not positive, that this was a peace offering. He accepted the items which had belonged to his men, but conveyed the message that he would not agree to cease fighting until the entire Fijian village came to sue for peace before his entire force, a custom which he had been told connoted abject surrender. He indicated a hill on which his men would wait. A few hours later the Fijians approached, on their knees and wailing, admitting their defeat and offering themselves as slaves to the Americans. Wilkes gave them a stern lecture then charged them with reprovisioning his ship with food and water, which was done the following day. He sailed away from Malolo feeling that he had responded appropriately to the provocations.

The blow I inflicted not only required to be done promptly and effectually, as a punishment for the murder of my officers, but was richly deserved for other outrages. It could not have fallen upon any place where it would have produced as much effect, in impressing the whole group with a full sense of our power and determination to punish such aggression.<sup>74</sup>

The men of the Expedition arrived in Fiji with prejudices about the 'savages' of the 'Cannibal Isles' and their experiences there confirmed their opinions. Ethnologist Horatio Hale wrote that the Fijians were treacherous

dissimulators, conducting their government by intrigues and machinations.

Melanesians, he wrote, (and in this he included Fijians) are

"sullen, sly, treacherous, indocile, stubborn, and of a cold temperament. A constant suspicion, the offspring of a continual fear of treachery, is displayed, not only in their dealings with strangers, but between members of the same tribe and even of the same family. Feejeeans are by nature a bloodthirsty, treacherous and rapacious people. Their evil qualities do not lie merely on the surface of the character but have their roots deep in their moral organization...The Feejeean may be said to differ from the Polynesian as the wolf from the dog; both when wild are equally fierce, but the ferocity of one may be easily subdued, while that of the other is deep-seated and untameable."<sup>75</sup>

Naturalist James D. Dana, though spending most of his time off shore in a small boat was affected as well.

Even the beauty of natural objects had, at times, a dark background. When, for example, after a day among the corals, we came, the next morning, upon a group of Feejee Savages with human bones in their mouths, finishing off the cannibal feast of the night; and as thoughtless of any impropriety as if the roast were of wild game taken the day before. In fact, so it was.<sup>76</sup>

All of them would have agreed with Williams and Calvert who wrote, "murder is not an occasional thing in Fiji, but habitual, systematic and classed among ordinary transactions."<sup>77</sup> Wilkes concluded his remarks on Fiji in the Narrative, "On taking our final departure from these islands, all of us felt great pleasure; Vendovi alone manifested his feelings by shedding tears at the last view of his native land."<sup>78</sup>

The Fijians were, perhaps, equally relieved to see the last of the Exploring Expedition. As Hudson was preparing to depart from Macuata he

...paid the king and chiefs a visit, gave them some advice relative to their future conduct, and mentioned to them that he was going away. The king and chiefs, with great naivete, replied they were extremely glad to hear it, for they had been in constant dread of having their town burnt, in consequence of the number of lies that were constantly told to him of them.<sup>79</sup>

The United States Exploring Expedition literally put Fiji on the map. The surveys that Wilkes had painstakingly compiled were assembled into charts and published in 1845 by the Navy Department. They were not perfect but they were a great improvement over what had existed before. Islands had been discovered and shoals located with precision. Navigation was much safer in Fijian waters as a direct result.

The published accounts of the Expedition's stay in Fiji did not inspire a great influx of merchants or adventurers to these somewhat hostile shores. Since the end of the sandalwood rush there had been no enticing commercial opportunity to make the dangers seem an acceptable risk when similar cargo could be obtained with greater safety from other islands. In spite of its stated intentions in Wilkes' orders, the American government did not manifest much interest in this distant archipelago which had no centralized government. American attention never progressed much beyond the administration of extraterritorial justice and attempts at enforcing the claim for damages which the United States commercial agent fanatically insisted were due him from Cakobau. Though Wilkes had appointed Whippy U.S. consul during his stay in Fiji this was never confirmed by Congress. First official American diplomatic representation was established when John B. Williams, U.S. consul to New Zealand, was given the additional task of representing American interests as commercial agent in Fiji as well. He was instructed to appoint Whippy as vice-agent, which he did in 1848.

The chiefs of Bau consolidated their dominant position over the other territories of Fiji. Tanoa died in 1852 and Cakobau became the ruler of Bau in name as well as fact. He became a Christian in 1854 at the behest of the Christian ruler of neighboring Tonga, who had come to occupy an influential

position in Fijian politics. With the aid of Tongan forces Bau finally defeated Rewa and a peace treaty was signed in 1855.

'Mr. Phillips', Cokanauto, succeeded to the title of Tui Dreketi after Cakobau had the holder of that office killed in 1845. Qaranqio also ruled as Tui Dreketi in 1851 after his half-brother died. If an American-oriented, Christianized Veidovi had survived to influence events in Rewa during these years it is interesting to speculate whether the United States might have taken more interest in opposing Bau's increasing strength. As events did turn out, Cakobau acquired sufficient power to refer to himself as Tui Viti, 'King of Fiji', in 1852 and eventually to form an archipelago-wide government in 1867.

Perhaps the greatest beneficiaries of American Expedition were the British missionaries and, indirectly, the British government. Wilkes found the missionaries in precarious condition, worried about their survival, unable to concentrate on the spreading of the gospel. He felt "they needed encouragement and ought to receive (it) from all who have it in their power to bestow"<sup>80</sup>. Wilkes did his best to encourage the missionaries directly and to leave no doubt in Fijian minds that they had the support of strong and ruthless Western powers. This was the result of personal conviction, not government instruction. He wrote in his autobiography

...it is a matter of gratification that we have tended to establish the missionaries and afford them protection and certain privileges conceded by the chiefs which will materially aid their efforts in civilizing them and putting an end to their savage barbarities so common before our operations.<sup>81</sup>

Following his visit the missionaries were treated with more respect and their message heeded with more attention, with a consequent increase in



conversions. In his analysis of cultural change in Fiji, W.R. Geddes maintains that

An important factor in gaining prestige for the Christian god was the navies possessed by his followers. The strength of the European power alone told in favour of the Christian god – especially to the warlike Fijians – but when it was deliberately used to support the missionary its effect was vastly increased.<sup>82</sup>

Wilkes and the men of the Exploring Expedition provided the last display of naval power from the outside world in Fiji until 1848, if American commercial agent Williams is to be believed. He notes, in a message to the Department of State in that year, that the British ship Calypso paid the first visit of any man-of-war from any nation since the Exploring Expedition departed in August of 1840.<sup>83</sup> By that time the missionary effect was well-established as The History of the Wesley Methodist Missionary Society declares that "...toward the end of 1848, after thirteen years' labour the Wesley Mission had gained a secure footing in the Fijian Islands and was laying plans for evangelizing the country."<sup>84</sup> Encouraged, the Wesleyans sent more missionaries, some of whom eventually became the advisors and champions of Cakobau in his struggle against the 'American claims', which were pressed so hard by Williams. The captain of an American warship in Fiji to force settlement of these claims grumbled against the British influence "that where one native is taught to love God, two are taught to love Queen Victoria."<sup>85</sup> As American pressure to pay this rather questionable debt increased, the British missionaries offered Cakobau a solution. The proposal to cede Fiji to Britain contained a clause which also turned over responsibility for the payment of the claims. In 1874 this proposal was accepted. Undoubtedly this result of his decidedly pro-missionary bias was not foreseen by Wilkes in 1840. Nevertheless, it is a result he probably approved. Colvocoresses, expressed his opinion, which

likely mirrored that of Wilkes and the majority of the squadron's men when he wrote his summation of the Fijians.

I think it would be a blessing to the whole race if the United States or some other civilized nation would conquer them into subjection and order. It would at once put an end to their dissensions and barbarities, and afford encouragement to commerce and safety to person and property.<sup>86</sup>

A product of his time and his country, Wilkes followed his conscience in the confrontation between Christianity and 'heathenism.' The forces of 'enlightenment' and 'civilization' won his allegiance, though, in Fiji, they were sponsored by the British.

NOTES

\* I am grateful to fellow students in the Pacific Research seminar whose discussions led to increased understanding of the area. Special thanks go to the co-contributors to this volume for their thoughtful criticism of this paper and to Dr. Brij V. Lal who inspired us all to produce our best work. The interpretations and presentation of facts remain totally my responsibility.

1. Charles Wilkes, Narrative of the United States Exploring Expedition, (Ridgewood, New Jersey, 1970) Vol. 3, 47.
2. Wilkes, Narrative, Vol. 3, 46.
3. Thomas Williams and James Calvert, Fiji and the Fijians; editor, George Stringer Rowe, (New York, 1859).
4. David Cargill, Journal, unpublished manuscript (microfilm), Hamilton Library, University of Hawaii. Since citation from this journal can be by reference to date alone, further citations will be given in the text and not noted.
5. Sir Edward Belcher, Narrative of a voyage round the world performed in her Majesty's ship "Sulphur" during the years 1836-1842, vol. 2, (London, 1843).
6. Stanley Brown, Men from Under the Sky, The Arrival of Westerners in Fiji, (Rutland, VT, 1973).
7. David Routledge, Matanitu, The Struggle for power in early Fiji, (Suva, Fiji, 1985), Chapter 1.
8. The Fijian language has a distinctive spelling and pronunciation: B represents the sound MB, C sounds like TH, D like ND, G like NG, and Q like NGG. Most writers of this early period dealt with Fijian words phonetically to the best of their understanding, but in this work the present-day Fijian spelling will be used except in quoted material. This will result in two different forms of some Fijian names; Vendovi for Veidovi and Ngaraningiou for Qaraniqio, for instance, but should not cause undue confusion.
9. Routledge, Matanitu.
10. Ralph Gerard Ward, American Activities in the Central Pacific, Vol. 3, (Ridgewood, N.J. 1966) 48-49.

11. Brown, Men from Under the Sky.
12. Wilkes, Narrative, Vol. 1, xxvii.
13. Wilkes, Narrative, Vol. 1, xxxviii.
14. Wilkes, Narrative, Vol. 1, xxxviii.
15. Wilkes, Narrative, Vol. 1, xxxviii.
16. Wilkes, Narrative, Vol. 1, 52.
17. Wilkes, Narrative, Vol. 1, 52.
18. Wilkes, Narrative, Vol. 1, 66.
19. Wilkes, Narrative, Vol. 1, 48-49.
20. Wilkes, Narrative, Vol. 1, 54.
21. Wilkes, Narrative, Vol. 1, 54.
22. Wilkes, Narrative, Vol. 1, 55-56.
23. Wilkes, Narrative, Vol. 1, 55-56.
24. Lt. George Colvocoresses, Four Years in a Government Exploring Expedition, (New York, 1852).
25. Wilkes, Narrative, Vol. 3, 57.
26. Wilkes, Narrative, Vol. 3, 57.
27. Wilkes, Narrative, Vol. 3, 57.
28. Wilkes, Narrative, Vol. 3, 57.
29. Wilkes, Narrative, Vol. 3, 59.
30. Wilkes, Narrative, Vol. 3, 59.
31. Wilkes, Narrative, Vol. 3, 59.
32. Wilkes, Narrative, Vol. 3, 66-67.
33. Wilkes, Narrative, Vol. 3, 66-67.
34. Wilkes, Narrative, Vol. 3, 66-67.
35. Wilkes, Narrative, Vol. 3, 66-67.
36. Wilkes, Narrative, Vol. 3, 51.

37. Wilkes, Narrative, Vol. 3, 52.
38. Charles Wilkes, Autobiography, (Washington, D.C., 1978), 478.
39. Charles Wilkes, Autobiography, 478.
40. Wilkes, Narrative, Vol. 3, 53.
41. Wilkes, Narrative, Vol. 3, 115.
42. Wilkes, Narrative, Vol. 3, 117.
43. Wilkes, Narrative, Vol. 3, 116.
44. Wilkes, Narrative, Vol. 3, 135.
45. Wilkes, Narrative, Vol. 3, 122.
46. Wilkes, Narrative, Vol. 3, 119.
47. Wilkes, Narrative, Vol. 3, 128.
48. Wilkes, Narrative, Vol. 3, 129.
49. Wilkes, Narrative, Vol. 3, 129.
50. Wilkes, Narrative, Vol. 3, 73.
51. Wilkes, Narrative, Vol. 3, 73.
52. Wilkes, Narrative, Vol. 3, 135.
53. Belcher, Narrative, 38.
54. Wilkes, Narrative, Vol. 2.
55. Wilkes, Narrative, Vol. 3, 75.
56. Wilkes, Narrative, Vol. 3, 155-156.
57. Wilkes, Narrative, Vol. 3, 119.
58. Wilkes, Narrative, Vol. 3, 298.
59. Wilkes, Narrative, Vol. 3, 156.
60. Wilkes, Narrative, Vol. 3, 156.
61. Wilkes, Narrative, Vol. 3, 162.
62. Wilkes, Narrative, Vol. 3, 169.

63. Wilkes, Narrative, Vol. 3, 212.
64. Wilkes, Narrative, Vol. 3, 213.
65. Wilkes, Narrative, Vol. 3, 242.
66. Wilkes, Narrative, Vol. 3, 244.
67. Wilkes, Narrative, Vol. 3, 244.
68. Wilkes, Narrative, Vol. 3, 259.
69. Wilkes, Narrative, Vol. 3, 262.
70. Wilkes, Narrative, Vol. 3, 265.
71. Wilkes, Narrative, Vol. 3, 271.
72. Wilkes, Narrative, Vol. 3, 276.
73. Wilkes, Narrative, Vol. 3, 277-278.
74. Wilkes, Narrative, Vol. 3, 185.
75. Horatio Hale, Ethnology and Philology, (New Jersey 1970), 45-50.
76. James D. Dana, Coral and Coral Islands, (New York 1890), 5.
77. Williams and Calvert, Fiji and the Fijians, 105.
78. Wilkes, Narrative, Vol. 3, 316.
79. Wilkes, Narrative, Vol. 3, 316.
80. Wilkes, Autobiography, 476.
81. Wilkes, Autobiography, 476.
82. W.R. Geddes, An Analysis of Cultural Change in Fiji, Ph.D thesis, London School of Economics and Political Science, 1948, 347-348.
83. Cited in Rhoda E. Hackler, Our Men in the Pacific, Ph.D. dissertation, University of Hawaii, 1978, 374.
84. G.J. Findlay and W.W. Holdsworth, The History of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, Vol. 3, (London, 1921), 431.
85. John C. Dorrance, Yankee Consul and the Cannibal King, microfilm University of Hawaii, 1966.
86. Colvocoresses, Four Years, 166.

APPENDIX I

## FEEJEE REGULATIONS

COMMERCIAL REGULATIONS MADE BY THE PRINCIPAL CHIEFS OF THE FEEJEE GROUP OF ISLANDS, AFTER FULL CONSIDERATION IN COUNCIL ON THE 14TH DAY OF MAY 1840

- 1st. All Consuls duly appointed, and received in the Feejee group of islands, shall be protected and respected both in their persons and property, and all foreigners obtaining the consent of the government, and conforming to the laws, shall receive the protection of the kings and chiefs.
- 2nd. All foreign vessels shall be received into the ports and harbours of the Feejees, for the purpose of obtaining supplies, and for commerce; and with their officers and crews, so long as they shall comply with these regulations, and behave themselves peaceably, shall receive the protection of the kings and chiefs.
- 3rd. The fullest protection shall be given to all foreign ships and vessels which may be wrecked and any property saved shall be taken possession of by the master of the vessel; who will allow a salvage, or portion of the property so saved, to those who may aid in saving, and protecting the same; and no embezzlement will be permitted under the circumstances whatever. The effects of all persons deceased shall be given up to the Consul of the nation to which they may have belonged.
- 4th. Any person guilty of the crime of murder upon any foreigner, shall be given up without delay to the commander of any public vessel of the nation to which the deceased may have belonged, upon his demanding the same, or be punished on shore.
- 5th. Every vessel shall pay a port charge of three dollars, to the king, before she will be allowed to receive refreshments on board; and shall pay for pilotage in and out, the sum of seven dollars, before she leaves the harbour; and pilots shall be appointed subject to the approval of the Consuls.
- 6th. All trading in spirituous liquors, or landing the same is strictly forbidden. Any person offending shall pay a fine of twenty-five dollars; and the vessel to which he belongs shall receive no more refreshments. Any spirituous liquors found on shore will be seized and destroyed.
- 7th. All deserters from vessels will be apprehended, and a reward paid of eight dollars to the person who apprehended him, and three dollars to the chief of the district in which he may be apprehended, on his delivery to the proper officer of the vessel. No master shall refuse to receive such deserter under a penalty of twenty-five dollars. Deserters taken after the vessel has sailed, shall be delivered up to the consul, to be dealt with as he may think fit. Any person who entices another to desert, or in any way assist him, shall be subject to a penalty of five dollars.

8th. Any seaman remaining on shore after nine o'clock at night, shall be made a prisoner of until the next morning when he shall be sent on board, and shall pay a fine of five dollars.

9th. Should the master of any vessel refuse to comply with any of these regulations, a statement of the case shall be furnished to the nation or the consul of the nation to which he belongs, and redress sought from thence.

10th. All magistrates or chiefs of districts where vessels or boats may visit, shall enforce the rules and regulations relative to the apprehension of deserters, or pay such a fine as the principal chief imposes.

11th These regulations shall be printed, promulgated, and a copy furnished to the master of each vessel visiting these islands.



# SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- David Cargill, Journal, unpublished manuscript (microfilm), Hamilton Library, University of Hawaii.
- Colvocoresses, George M., Four Years in a Government Exploring Expedition, (New York 1852).
- John C. Dorrance, Yankee Consul and Cannibal King, John Brown Williams and the American Land Claims in Fiji, A Study, University of Hawaii, (1966).
- W.R. Geddes, An Analysis of Cultural Change in Fiji, (Suva, Fiji 1985).
- Rhoda E. Hackler, Our Men in the Pacific, Ph.D. dissertation, University of Hawaii, (1978).
- Horatio E. Hale, Ethnography and Philology, (Ridgewood, N.J. 1968).
- David Routledge, Matanitu, The struggle for power in early Fiji, (Suva, Fiji 1985).
- Deryck Scarr, Fiji: a short history, (Laie, Hawaii 1984).
- Ralph Gerard Ward, American Activities in the Central Pacific from 1790 to 1870, Vol. 3, (Ridgewood, New Jersey 1966-1967).
- Charles Wilkes, Autobiography, (Washington, D.C. 1978).
- Charles Wilkes, Narrative of the United States Exploring Expedition, (Ridgewood, New Jersey 1970).
- Thomas Williams and James Calvert (editor, George Stringer Rowe) Fiji and the Fijians, (New York 1859).

FIREARMS ON MALAITA - 1870-1900

Paul D'Arcy

A significant body of post-war scholarship in Pacific History has focussed on the impact of Euro-American contact upon the indigenous inhabitants of the Pacific Islands. Interpretations have varied. Broadly speaking, these interpretations have tended to polarize around two distinct schools of thought. On one hand the so-called "fatal impact" school asserts that Pacific Islanders were unable to adjust to Euro-American inroads and collapsed under the strain. Two classic examples of this line of argument are Harrison Wright's 1959 study New Zealand, 1769-1840: Early Years of Western Contact, and Alan Moorehead's 1969 publication The Fatal Impact: An Account of the Invasion of the South Pacific 1767-1840. Both of the above authors claim that Western contact had devastating implications for indigenous Pacific societies. In particular, epidemics resulting from the introduction of exotic diseases, and a new, uncontrolled form of fighting caused by the introduction of firearms into traditional systems of warfare are said to have dramatically increased the mortality rate. Traditional systems of beliefs and practices could not control or explain these new circumstances. Decimated by epidemics, torn apart by unrestrained warfare, and with the basis of their system of beliefs undermined, these societies became demoralized and consequently less resistant to Western penetration and domination.<sup>1</sup>

Since the publication of these theories a number of scholars have sought to show that indigenous societies in the Pacific displayed a considerable degree of resilience and adaptability to Western contact. In this school of thought culture contact is seen not as the domination of Pacific Islander by European, but as a more positive interaction between two vibrant cultures.<sup>2</sup>

In her 1971 article in the Journal of Pacific History "Guns and Men in Melanesia" Dorothy Shineberg examined the impact of firearms in the Pacific. Shineberg demonstrated that despite technological developments firearms were limited in range, accuracy, reliability and rate of fire up until the late 1860s. Only with the development of the Martini-Henry rifle of 1871 were all of these problems effectively overcome.<sup>3</sup>

Focusing on the 1567 Mendana expedition in the Solomon Islands Shineberg shows how Melanesians soon overcame any initial awe they might have had for firearms and began to exploit the limitation of these weapons. Open combat was quickly abandoned for reliance on fighting in the bush where natural cover could be exploited for concealment, and for protection from projectiles. Within six weeks of first experiencing gunfire some warriors from Guadalcanal had realized that they could exploit the tell-tale flash of the ignition system's priming pan, which occurred just before the release of the projectile from the gun barrel<sup>4</sup>, by diving under water to avoid being shot. Ramparts of sand were constructed to act as cover from arquebus fire, although no effective strategy was devised to counter the Spanish culverin which was able to breach this rampart.<sup>5</sup>

The longer the Solomon Islanders were exposed to gunfire, the greater their adaptations to it and the less effective its power. Shineberg felt that with time they would very probably have even gone underground to counter artillery as the Maori did two centuries later.<sup>6</sup> But the Spanish stay was "too short for the ultimate in adaptations; which was for the Islanders themselves to acquire firearms."<sup>7</sup> It was not until the Nineteenth Century that contacts with European and American vessels were sufficiently regular or sustained enough for such a process to occur. Firearms were among the

earliest and most eagerly sought items of Western material culture by Islanders throughout the Pacific. At the same time effective adaptations to the firearms of the time were devised rapidly, just as had occurred earlier in the Solomons. For example, as has already been noted, the Maori developed superb fieldworks to counteract European artillery while in New Caledonia warriors learned to draw volleys, dodge, and then set upon their musket-armed foe with clubs and spears before they could reload.<sup>8</sup>

This adaptability, combined with the technical defects of firearms prior to 1870 brings into question the degree to which the introduction of firearms did lead to increased fatalities in indigenous warfare. In a later article Shineberg noted that while the use of muskets did not appear to cause increased casualties on Espiritu Santo, the introduction to Tanna resulted in more deaths in hostilities than occurred in the pre-firearms' era. On Ponape muskets are said to have acted as a deterrent to hostilities.<sup>9</sup> This variety in response led Shineberg to suggest that more precise case studies of individual societies were required before a general conclusion upon the impact of firearms could be made.<sup>10</sup>

In 1974 in an article entitled "Firearms and Indigenous Warfare: A Case Study" Kerry Howe stated a similar opinion of future research directions into European weaponry in the Pacific islands.<sup>11</sup> Howe's article concentrated on the Loyalty Islands. He concluded that, in the Loyalty group at least, "...Europeans and their technology did not change the tactics and techniques of warfare as long as it lasted, and, in particular, firearms were responsible for killing only a small portion of those who died in the fighting."<sup>12</sup> A number of reasons are given to account for this. The poor quality and technical shortcomings of the guns used made them unsuitable for the guerrilla

warfare practiced in the Loyalty's.<sup>13</sup> The function of warfare did not change so that there was no reason to increase the number of casualties inflicted.<sup>14</sup>

Few studies have been devoted specifically to substantiate or repudiate Shineberg and Howe's conclusions on firearms in the Pacific Islands. Firearms are usually only referred to in generalized terms as part of more wide ranging studies of island groups or themes. Clearly, more detailed studies are required. A study of firearms on Malaita in the latter part of the Nineteenth Century is particularly useful for a number reasons. Malaita is a large, populous island in the southeast of the Solomon Islands. Much of the groundwork for this period on Malaita has been covered in Peter Corris' book on the Solomon Islands' labor trade, Passage, Port and Plantation. However, a more detailed focus on firearms in indigenous warfare on Malaita in this period serves to link Shineberg's study of the first conflict between Europeans and Solomon islanders with Peter Corris and Roger Keesing's Lightning Meets the West Wind - The Malaita Massacre, which examines one of the last conflicts between Europeans and islanders in the form of the final 'pacification' of the Kwaio of Malaita in 1927.<sup>15</sup> Shineberg's studies concentrate on a period notable for relatively impotent firearms, whereas by 1870 firearms are becoming highly effective, deadly weapons. By 1927 the age of modern firepower had well and truly arrived.<sup>16</sup> By examining the use of firearms in fighting between indigenous groups, this study is useful for contrasting with hostilities between Malaitans and Europeans. As specific island case study, this paper is not only useful for chronological comparisons within Malaitan history, but also for comparisons with studies of other geographical entities.

Mendana's expedition had only limited contact with Malaita when their brigantine constructed for coastal exploration briefly touched upon the

southern coasts of Malaita and South Malaita in April 1567.<sup>17</sup> The brigantine never spent more than one day at any one place on these coasts. There was little chance or need for adaptation to the initial shock of encountering gunfire for the first time. Three separate encounters occurred on the first three days, all ending in hostilities. The only friendly interaction occurred on South Malaita after these hostile meetings. Each time the Spanish opened fire with their arquebusiers the islanders retired. The Spanish narratives are vague as to how panic-stricken these withdrawals were.<sup>18</sup> On two occasions the Spanish bullets struck one or more of the islanders, but in the other hostile action the islanders retired upon receiving a volley that caused no casualties.<sup>19</sup> This suggests that the Spanish firearms were initially intimidating not solely because of their ability to strike invisibly.

With the departure of the brigantine Malaita returned to its former isolation from Western contact. On August 20, 1767 the English explorer Carteret 'discovered' Ndai island.<sup>20</sup> From Ndai he could see the nearby island of Manoaba to the southwest and beyond that the northeast coast of Malaita. After foiling what he perceived to be an attempted ambush by the inhabitants of Ndai, Carteret sailed away to the northwest on August 21 without investigating his sightings to the southwest. At Ndai Carteret felt that the inhabitants "seemed to have had some knowledge of firearms by their signs to us."<sup>21</sup> Carteret's observation may have been real or imagined. More recently Charles E. Fox has noted that in oral traditions there "seems to be no memories of Spaniards' visits unless the sea ghosts of San Cristobal, who fire at canoes, or the big sailing canoes of Santa Cruz with a deck and a house on them, called Tepuke, are memories of Mendana's big ships."<sup>22</sup> Of course, these

phenomena may also have been inspired by ship visits after Mendana's expedition.

When the French explorer Surville came to the southeast Solomons in 1769 he found the people of Ulawa, not unnaturally, initially suspicious and apprehensive about coming aboard.<sup>23</sup> Ulawa had been visited by the same brigantine that had touched upon Malaita in 1567 and had had a similar encounter with Spanish firearms.<sup>24</sup> When one of the islanders aimed his bow menacingly at the French they opened fire with muskets. One of the islanders was hit, whereupon the Ulawans fled back to shore. But this episode did not deter twenty canoes of warriors paddling out a few hours later and challenging the ship. They were soon put to flight by four rounds of grapeshot from the ship's cannon.<sup>25</sup> Surville's only encounter with Malaitans was when a few canoes came well offshore and traded with his vessel as it cruised south along Malaita's eastern shore.<sup>26</sup>

European visits to the southeast Solomons continued to be fleeting and sporadic after Surville's visit well into the Nineteenth Century. In the 1830's traders and whalers began to frequent the Solomons in increasing numbers. But, as in the past, Malaita's contact with the European world remained very limited.<sup>27</sup> All this changed in the 1870's when European ships began visiting the Solomon Islands in pursuit of cheap labor for the newly emergent plantations of Queensland and Fiji. By the mid 1880's most islands in the Solomon group had been visited by labor recruiters, with Malaita being the most fruitful source of recruits.<sup>28</sup> Through gifts from recruiters to facilitate recruitment and compensate for the absence of recruits from their communities, and through the purchasing power of their indentured wages Malaitans were introduced to a wide variety of western goods.<sup>29</sup>

At the same time as the labor trade was beginning in the South West Pacific a series of independent inventions in Europe and North America were radically advancing the technical capabilities of firearms.<sup>30</sup> From the 1730's until the 1830's the standard service arm of the armies of Europe and the Americas were smoothbore flintlock muskets. Percussion muskets took over this role in the 1830's. By the 1850's percussion muskets were still in service but increasingly muzzle-loading rifles were coming into general service. Although firearm's technology had evolved since Mendana's day many of the same basic problems still existed. Smoothbore muskets had generally similar characteristics regardless of whether they had a flintlock or percussion ignition mechanism. A trigger mechanism was used to ignite a small powder charge on an external pan which in turn ignited a larger powder charge in the base of the musket barrel. The force of this latter ignition propelled a projectile out of the barrel. The ball had a smaller diameter than the smooth barrel to allow for loading of the projectile down the muzzle. Because of this it bounced from side to side in the barrel when fired and thus tended to curve in flight in the direction of the side of the barrel it had last struck. Furthermore, these projectiles were of relatively slow velocity and tended to drop away very quickly in flight, and to be blown off course in strong winds. The external priming mechanisms were very vulnerable to dampness. As a result of all of these factors smoothbore muskets were generally unreliable at any range over one hundred yards, and were preferable used at ranges of fifty yards or less. The complicated loading procedure and the tendency for the inside of the barrel to become clogged with used powder charges meant that even in skilled hands the rate of fire was relatively slow and after prolonged use the muskets were prone to misfiring.<sup>31</sup>



But by the end of the 1860's bullets were being inserted directly into a breech at the base of the barrel rather than having to be pushed down the barrel. This radically increased the rate of fire. In 1867 Colonel Boxer, superintendant at the Royal Laboratory at Woolwich Arsenal, invented the all metal cartridge. This contained a percussion cap in its base as well as the projectile, thus doing away with the need for open powder charges and all their inherent problems. The metal cartridge also allowed the breech to be sealed at the moment of firing to prevent the usual leaking of hot gases at the breach. All of these developments meant that projectiles could now be tighter fitting in gun barrels, and that these barrels could be grooved, or rifled, to impart spin on the projectile. This process improved both the speed and accuracy of the projectile. By 1870 rifles such as the single shot Snider were becoming formidable weapons, already highly accurate at ranges of many hundreds of yards.<sup>32</sup> The Martini-Henry rifle adopted by the British army in 1871 exemplified the new dominance of the rifle on the battlefield. "Fast, accurate, tough, impervious to the weather," it was "...a weapon that made every other gun obsolete."<sup>33</sup> Yet it in turn was soon outdated by the development of quick-firing repeating rifles.<sup>34</sup>

These rapid advances in firearms technology meant that every few years waves of discarded obsolete weapons flooded the international arms' markets.<sup>35</sup> In this way many smoothbore muskets had found their way to those Pacific islands in contact with Europeans and Americans.<sup>36</sup> Now it was the turn of Malaita and others. In the 1860's attempts were made to keep up with the advancing technology of the day by converting recently issued muzzleloading rifles to breechloading rifles by adding breech block mechanisms. The British army, for example, converted its muzzleloading

Enfields by adding the breech block mechanism invented by Jacob Snider of New York. This greatly increased the capabilities of these Enfields but in 1869 the Snider-Enfield, as the converted model was known, was abandoned for the new Martini-Henry rifle.<sup>37</sup> Through the medium of British Imperial connections and the advance of military technology, entrepreneurs in Australia and Fiji were thus given access to large numbers of Snider-Enfields at a time when they sought to expand their labor recruiting activities in the Solomon Islands. The Snider-Enfield might be outdated in Europe, but in the Pacific Islands it represented a major improvement on the smoothbore muskets that were the predominant trade firearm in the Pacific up until this time.

As in most of the Pacific islands, firearms became much sought after among Solomon islanders as the labor trade developed.<sup>38</sup> When the Queensland Government attempted to impose limitations upon the quantity of guns and ammunition that recruits could take with them back to Melanesia, the Premier of Queensland, John Douglas, was confronted by a delegation of two hundred Melanesians who told him that if such a restriction were imposed "no more boys come along Queensland. Boys altogether go Fiji. Plenty guns along of Fiji."<sup>39</sup> Nevertheless a complete ban on firearms and ammunition sales to Pacific islanders was imposed in 1884 in areas under British control.<sup>40</sup> The result was that recruiters for Fiji and Queensland lost out greatly to French and German rivals who were still free to entice recruits by offers of firearms.<sup>41</sup> A Snider rifle was a significant investment, costing the equivalent of about one year's wages in the 1890's.<sup>42</sup> Many Malaitans went to New Caledonia or Samoa instead where large number of Winchester, Snider and Spencer rifles were available.<sup>43</sup> Many laborers in Queensland simply returned to Melanesia with their wages intact and then bought guns into Malaita after

the 1884 ban despite the risk of confiscation of guns without compensation if they were discovered by Colonial authorities.<sup>45</sup>

Prior to the banning of firearms and ammunition sales in 1884 many muskets and rifles were introduced into Malaita. By 1883 Commander Moore of the Royal Navy's Australian Squadron estimated that no fewer than 100 rifles and 1500 muskets annually, with appropriate supplies of ammunition, went into the New Hebrides from Queensland alone either as recruitment "gifts" or as purchases by time-expired laborers. Moore felt that the Solomon Islands, and particularly Malaita were no less well equipped.<sup>46</sup> That same year Bishop Selwyn, a leading church figure in the South West Pacific, reported that every recruit brought back one or more guns and three to four hundred rounds of ball cartridge. One chief on Ysabel had "upwards of one hundred stands of arms, many of them breechloaders, and a few Winchesters."<sup>47</sup>

After 1884 firearms continued to come into Malaita, albeit on a significantly smaller scale, through smuggling or through the medium of French and German recruiters. In 1890, for example, the German recruiting vessel Maria secured seventy-two recruits from Port Adams alone, each of whom received one Snider rifle and a quantity of ammunition. The next year a French recruiting vessel had no trouble attracting recruits with its offer of two Sniders and ammunition per recruit.<sup>48</sup> In 1897 the British Resident Commissioner in the Solomon Islands, Charles Woodford, was informed that over fifty rifles were smuggled into Malaita onboard one ship in the previous year.<sup>49</sup> As late as 1908 cases of gun smuggling were still being reported.<sup>50</sup> In fact the illegal trade in Sniders and Winchesters continued into the 1920's on Malaita.<sup>51</sup> In 1927 one district in north Malaita surrendered 1070 rifles to Colonial authorities during their attempt to disarm the island.<sup>52</sup>

The main weapons involved in the labor trade were tomahawks, old smoothbore muskets, Snider-Enfield rifles, with some modern repeating rifles on occasion.<sup>53</sup> In 1884 the recruiter William Wawn mentioned that "smoothbore muskets and very often even Snider rifles" were the most common forms of recruiting inducement offered.<sup>54</sup> Commander Moore's estimate of a fifteen to one ration for muskets to rifles in the labor trade is probably correct up to the mid-1880's.<sup>55</sup> Writing in 1887, Bishop Selwyn felt that most of the guns involved were breechloaders.<sup>56</sup> From the mid-1880's Snider rifles were the predominant trade guns coming into the Solomon Islands.<sup>57</sup>

A number of contemporary European authorities felt that this influx of firearms was causing severe disruption to Malaita. By 1887, J.B. Thurston, the Assistant High Commissioner to the Western Pacific, felt that these weapons were "demoralizing the Natives of the Pacific and bringing about their rapid destruction."<sup>58</sup> In 1888 some members of the Colonial Office were of the opinion that if arms and liquor sales were not prohibited the islanders would be wiped out.<sup>59</sup> Some believed that European arms had exacerbated intergroup fighting and murder because they made killing easier.<sup>60</sup> Inherent in these perceptions were the beliefs that firearms were superior to the traditional armory, and that indigenous societies were incapable of or unwilling to regulate their use of firearms.

Prior to the introduction of firearms the main weapons in the Malaitan armory were spears, lances, clubs, and bows and arrows.<sup>61</sup> Most projectile weapons had sharp flint tips capable of inflicting a disabling wound. Large, thin wicker shields were often carried by Solomon Islanders.<sup>62</sup> In skillful hands these shields were sufficient to ward off projectiles. For fighting at close quarters Malaitan warriors relied on lances and a variety of clubs. The

Spanish found the warriors of Malaita's southern coast armed with clubs consisting of a stone head the size of an orange attached to a wooden shaft. Other clubs consisted of four to six foot long pieces of very hard timber, shaped so that one end was somewhat flattened, tapering down to two sharp edges. In a fight on Santa Isabel in 1769 one of Surville's men received a blow to the head with such a club which cut open his hat and split his head down to the bone. During the same fight other Frenchmen were wounded by deep thrusts from lances, some penetrating as much as five inches into the body. Only one man died from his wounds however.<sup>63</sup> While skilled warriors could dodge or parry clubs, lances and traditional projectiles, the Snider-Enfield and other firearms of its time struck invisibly and carried immense hitting power, even at some distance. Wicker shields and nimble footwork were of little use against such weapons in the right hands.

From an early date, Melanesians had a reputation as "savage" and warlike people. Within Melanesia, some islands were particularly notorious. Malaita was one of these islands. Malaita men had a reputation among Europeans for being truculent, self assertive and treacherous, and were regarded with caution by most outsiders, including other Solomon islanders. The island appeared to many observers to be in a continual state of turmoil.<sup>64</sup> The population of Malaita was highly fragmented linguistically, geographically and politically. Settlements on Malaita ranged in size from ten to two hundred people, with political units correspondingly small and localized. A distinction was made between the inland people and the coastal dwellers. Whereas the people of the interior tended to live in small, scattered hamlets practicing swidden agriculture and rearing pigs, the coastal peoples tended to live just offshore on small, densely populated, islands in the shelter of the various lagoons lining Malaita's coastline. Some of these islands were man-made.<sup>65</sup>

A more or less continual state of tension existed between inland and coastal peoples. This did not prevent the existence of regular market days between the two groups. Such markets were held on the coast opposite the Lau and Langelanga lagoons every few days.<sup>66</sup> Kinship ties also linked the two peoples. Kwaisulia, a prominent figure in the Lau lagoon, was born out of a union between a coastal mother and an inland father. Such links gave the coastal peoples access to garden land and fresh water on the mainland.<sup>67</sup> Larger trade networks also existed. For example, the inhabitants of North Malaita used ebony from Isabel for their spears and bows.<sup>68</sup> Links outside of localized units tended to be very tenuous, even between neighboring groups.<sup>69</sup>

Warfare was not a way of life on Malaita; rather it was a part of a way of life. Fighting was to a large degree formalized, with a number of social restraints acting upon it. Warfare was intimately associated with certain beliefs and customs central to the cohesion of society. All insults and injuries, perceived or real, or infractions of social tabus such as adultery required the seeking of compensation for the affront to community mana or prestige.<sup>70</sup> Revenge could be exacted upon the perceived guilty party, or his kin, as a policy of collective responsibility was pursued.<sup>72</sup> Killings might be conducted by individuals without community sanction for personal reasons. The perpetrator's community would support and protect him, unless he was believed to be a sorcerer, in which case he would be handed over to the aggrieved party.<sup>73</sup> This sense of collective responsibility and group prestige served to strengthen social cohesiveness.<sup>74</sup> On occasion revenge was sought through the offering of rewards for the death of certain individuals. Such rewards were known as blood money.<sup>75</sup> This system of order led to an endless round of revenge killings and caused continual tension between groups.

Hostilities were characterized by weeks of anxious waiting with many threats and little action. Fighting might be heralded by a formal declaration or simply begin with a surprise attack or the ambush of an unsuspecting victim. When a death occurred there would be a combination of confusion and excitement, or threats of revenge combined with fear. The aggrieved party might rush out of the village to tear up gardens or do some other damage, or seek a quick counterkilling of some harmless connection of the suspected instigator. Both sides might simply shut themselves up in their villages, enduring sleepless nights and neglecting their crops. Gradually the tension would die down and normal life would resume until the next affront or until redistribution could be executed. Then the process would begin again.<sup>76</sup>

The actual number of killings was relatively small. Open fights were practically unknown. Where they did occur they followed the general pattern of hostilities, being characterized by demonstrations of force and threats of attack that rarely materialized. The first casualties would usually decide the issue, although fierce battles might rage over the possession of a corpse, which carried great social significance in terms of mana.<sup>77</sup> The more usual forms of hostilities were ambushes of unsuspecting victims or surprise attacks on villages.<sup>78</sup> Some European observers such as Captain Simpson of H.M.S. Blanche found the Malaita method of warfare somewhat cowardly.<sup>79</sup> But such a judgement fails to put warfare on Malaita in its social context. Malaitan warriors could be extremely brave as the castaway John Renton discovered. On one occasion one warrior remained firing arrows into a raiding party when the rest of his village had fled. Despite the obvious danger of encirclement he stood firm until he was surrounded and dispatched.<sup>80</sup>

In a society of highly fragmented, mutually suspicious communities, tensions were never far from the surface. A number of factors operated to reduce the intensity of intergroup relations. Attempted mediation between hostile groups by third parties or elected mediators such as the aofia of the Lau lagoon show that warfare was not the sole means by which compensation was sought.<sup>81</sup> Peace ceremonies sought to resolve conflict by appeasing both sides. This usually involved material compensation for injuries inflicted, or ritual exchanges.<sup>82</sup> Social bonds and economic needs imposed controls of inter-group hostility. Killing had no rationale in itself. It was a means of maintaining individual and communal prestige by assuring that all deaths were avenged. At the same time the fear of retaliation tended to tone down the level of this revenge. Arthur Hopkins, a missionary on Malaita, noted that there was little hostility in their feuds and that they rarely fought with the lust to kill.<sup>83</sup>

Although notions of hereditary power existed, in general leaders on Malaita did not rule by any given right. Rather they exerted influence by virtue of their ability in various fields of socially valued endeavors such as martial prowess, manipulation of magic, oratory, and the ability to acquire and distribute wealth. Such non-institutionalized leadership was highly fluid and dependent on constant reassertion of the skills for which these leaders were valued.<sup>84</sup> In warfare leaders earned their status through their ability to direct the community's war efforts and for their own fighting abilities. Such men were known as ramo. They acted as the chief avengers in the system of blood feuding that prevailed on Malaita. Much of their power and wealth, and the loyalty of their followers depended on their collecting blood money and redistributing it.<sup>85</sup>



In the decade or so before firearms became widespread certain coastal groups were able to use their relative advantage in access to guns to assert themselves over their enemies. In particular coastal groups gained a temporary ascendancy over their enemies.<sup>86</sup> Prominent leaders called passage masters were able to extend their influence beyond the usual localized limits of traditional society. Passages were safe ports of call for recruiting ships, usually at places where tracks from the interior met the coast thus giving access to recruits from inland communities as well as coastal settlements (assuming that the coast people were agreeable!). The passage masters gained influence through their manipulation of contacts with recruiting ships which they sought to monopolize. Such interactions gave them access to western goods, including firearms.<sup>87</sup>

Peter Corris' study of the passage master Kwaisulia of Ada Gege has shown that while firearms aided in defeating Ada Gene's rivals Manaoba and Fuana Fou,<sup>88</sup> the manipulation of traditional roles was of major importance in his influence. Kwaisulia was a ramo who also possessed some hereditary standing in Ada Gege. It was not so much his access to western goods but his manipulation of their distribution that earned him influence. There are indications that Kwaisulia overstepped traditional limitations in a number of instances. His conduct of warfare against his enemies was more vigorous than was usual and forced them to flee. He seems also to have appropriated rights accorded only to hereditary Lau chiefs. He soon eclipsed all local leaders in his mana and was de facto leader of his area from the 1880's until his death in 1909.<sup>89</sup>

For all his achievements he did not leave any enduring power. Kwaisulia was, in essence, using a new means to pursue traditional aims based on a system that lacked any mechanisms for ensuring the continuity of power beyond

any individual's lifetime. Although information is lacking on other Malaita passage masters such as Billy Mahualla of Alite Bay and Foulanger of Port Adam, they seem also to have owed their influence to traditional practices as well as to association with recruiting ships.<sup>90</sup>

The coastal peoples of Malaita no longer sought to monopolize the Queensland and Fiji labor trade after 1884. The demand for firearms seems to have been satisfied in certain coastal areas of Malaita by this time, meaning that there was less incentive to seek recruitment.<sup>91</sup> Some coastal communities were becoming increasingly discerning in their tastes by 1883. In that year the Daphne had trouble obtaining recruits on Malaita because it only offered poor quality rifles.<sup>92</sup> Other reasons for this move are evident, such as the social disruption of the long-term absence of many of the young males of these communities.<sup>93</sup> With the sale of firearms to islanders banned it may have no longer seemed dangerous to allow enemies access to the recruiting ships.

As a result Malaita men from the interior became increasingly prominent on the recruitment lists after 1884. Although many still went to Australia and Fiji despite the ban on firearms, the desire to own a gun still figured strongly in their motivation for volunteering for indentured service.<sup>94</sup> French and German recruiters managed to get Malaitan labor despite the poor conditions on the plantations they recruited for because of their inducements of rifles and ammunition for volunteers.<sup>95</sup> By the 1890's the distribution of firearms was becoming more equitable. Coastal dwellers and inland peoples previously lacking in guns were soon arming themselves with Snider-Enfields, often giving them an advantage over their former tormentors who generally had less modern guns. The coastal settlements were upset at the arming of the interior communities.<sup>96</sup> But the continued influence of Kwaisulia despite the

rise in firepower of his enemies like Manoaba suggests that firearms were not as influential as has been generally asserted.<sup>97</sup>

In adopting firearms Malaitans became dependent on an external force of weaponry over which they had limited control. The 1884 firearms' ban severely curtailed, but by no means halted, the flow of firearms into Malaita. Without a plentiful, accessible source of firearms Malaitans were forced to learn how to repair and maintain their original trade guns or rely on gradually deteriorating weapons. Most of the muskets and rifles that came into the hands of Pacific islanders had been bought cheaply by Euro-American entrepreneurs from discarded army stocks as trade items.<sup>98</sup> Walter Ivens, a missionary on Malaita, felt that the Snider carbines used there were "...not very serviceable weapons."<sup>99</sup> A number of European observers on Malaita in the 1920's felt that by this time the islanders' guns were more of a danger to their possessor than to the targets they were aimed at.<sup>100</sup> However, the condition of Malaitan firearms was more complex than these observers suggest. The Kwaio of the interior of Malaita kept their guns well oiled, polished and dry above the men's house fires at night.<sup>101</sup> In the late 1920's the former inspector of labor R.F. Thomson noted that the locals (i.e. Malaitans) seemed to have a "...natural facility for bringing old blunder busses up to date with hair triggers and other attachments they fashion."<sup>102</sup> At the same time Ivens claimed that relatively good quality tower rifles were damaged by the Lau lagoon mens' habit of filing off part of the barrel to allow for easier storage in their canoes.<sup>103</sup>

The end of free access to Euro-American weapons' technology in 1884 and the end of the labor trade in the early 1900's must have severely curtailed Malaita's access to ammunition. Walter Ivens thought that there were no

cartridges available on Malaita by the 1920's. It is more probable that there was an irregular trickle of cartridges in these later years.<sup>104</sup> This scarcity caused grossly inflated prices. For example, Snider cartridges smuggled onto Malaita from nearby Gela could sell for as much as 3 per cartridge in the early 1900s.<sup>105</sup> Accordingly ammunition tended to be used judiciously and Malaitans became adept at converting cartridges from more modern rifles for use in their old firearms.<sup>106</sup>

It is debatable whether the level of violence in this period was greater than in pre-firearms' times. While Peter Corris suggests that firearms caused a rise in casualties and stimulated hostilities on Malaita, Deryck Scarr has questioned this viewpoint.<sup>107</sup> There certainly are indications of an unsettled state of affairs on Malaita after 1870. Walter Ivens felt that whereas killings had social meaning in earlier times men now killed either for the sake of killing or in order to get some desired object owned by their victim.<sup>108</sup> In a six week period in 1900 Arthur Hopkins reported twelve killings in his area alone.<sup>109</sup> The succession of the aofia in the Lau lagoon is said to have ended in this period, removing a check on an already escalating level of bloodshed.<sup>110</sup> This dislocation of the aofia title may have been a sign of Kwaisulia's rising influence over the lagoon area or the result of a rising level of conflict discrediting the role of the aofia.

The power of the ramo apparently increased during the period of the labor trade. Missionary accounts refer to disruptive bands of "braves" and independent professional killers who terrorized the population and eagerly sought to collect any blood money that was in the offering.<sup>111</sup> These descriptions may be more than just missionary bias. Malaita was disturbed by the return of time-expired indentured laborers who tended to arrive

well-armed, self-confident, and alienated to various degrees from their old customs and conventions.<sup>112</sup> It may also be a result of a preference to pay for "professionals" rather than seek redress on one's own accord because of the dangers that firearms now introduced into warfare. Certainly firearms are claimed to have made the job easier for ramo, some of whom built up large kill tallies. For instance, Irokwato of Malaita is said to have killed at least forty men and maybe as many as one hundred in his career as a ramo. He usually shot his victims from a concealed position.<sup>113</sup> This trend towards the use of specialists contradicts the general pattern in Polynesia where the introduction of firearms tended to act as an equalizer, making all combatants potentially lethal.<sup>114</sup>

The use of firearms may have led to an increasing reliance on fortifications. Manmade defenses were used on Malaita prior to the introduction of firearms, and any adjustments that occurred to compensate for gun fire, were usually variations of traditional defenses rather than new types of fortifications. Sieges occurred both before and after the introduction of firearms, although evidence on the relative frequency of sieges is lacking.<sup>115</sup> There is mention of a heavy, close-set palisade built to shelter the inhabitants of Ada Gege from rifle fire from the mainland which was only a few hundred yards away. At night the landing places were closed with logs and sentries kept watch.<sup>116</sup> Such defenses were not new. Prior to the introduction of firearms Renton mentions that the coastal village of "sulu Fou" was surrounded by a decaying breastwork of logs sometime around 1870. This breastwork had served as a defence in an earlier siege.<sup>117</sup> The transition from breastworks to full palisades cannot be definitely attributed to firearms, as double lines of log palisades, loopholed for archers, were

used to defend hill settlements in traditional times. Ivens states that the use of palisades in the Lau lagoon area hailed from the hills.<sup>118</sup> Hopkins describes one such hill settlement palisade as being from eight to ten feet high and constructed of heavy tree trunks. He added that the space between the two palisades of one village had been filled in with soil, possibly as an added protection against bullets.<sup>119</sup>

Rannie's account of Ada Gege in 1886 and Wawn's description of artificial islands at Auki in 1888 both refer to thick stone walls on the outside of these islands.<sup>120</sup> Ivens refers to the construction of a stone wall around the island of Funaa Vou as protection from rifle bullets in anticipation for an expected attack by Sulu Vou sometime between 1888 and 1890.<sup>121</sup> These stone walls were not necessarily adaptations to gunfire. Renton mentions stone breastworks on the artificial islands of the Lau lagoon prior to the introduction of firearms.<sup>122</sup> Accounts by Ivens and Renton of the construction of artificial islands suggest these stone walls may have served a primarily structural role that later proved useful as fortifications.<sup>123</sup> In contrast to the adaptation of existing features, Kwaisulia also used barbed wire in the defences of Ada Gege.<sup>124</sup>

Ivens' and the castaway John Renton's accounts of warfare show a great deal of continuity in the conflicts that occurred in north eastern coastal Malaita before and after the introduction of firearms.<sup>125</sup> Massacres occurred in Renton's day as well as in the post-firearms era of Ivens', but in general both depict an intermittent series of low-level conflicts, occasionally punctuated by more bloody encounters. Possibly the scope of alliances expanded with the introduction of firearms, with warriors from as far afield as Port Adam fighting in the conflicts of the Lau lagoon in the firearms era.<sup>126</sup>

The use of firearms seems to have been modified to suit existing approaches to fighting. Projectile weapons had existed in the traditional arsenal, but much of the actual killing was done at close range with clubs, lances or projectiles. In the dense bush environment of Malaita the field of vision was restricted, and assailants could approach their victims undetected. Even in open fights the antagonists were in close proximity to each other. In the 1870's the rifle replaced the club as the favorite weapon of Malaitan warriors.<sup>127</sup> Most killings continued to be enacted at very short range with either rifle or club, thus neutralizing the chief advantage of the rifle — its ability to kill at a distance.<sup>128</sup>

Shortages of ammunition were probably a major reason for the use of close range firing after the end of the Labor trade in the Twentieth Century.<sup>129</sup> But internal cultural factors also seem to have influenced the use of firearms. It is perhaps significant that when the Kwaio ramo Basiana killed District Officer Bell in 1927 he did so by using his rifle to club Bell to death, rather than to shoot him.<sup>130</sup> Attacks on visiting recruiting vessels in the 1880's were conducted with metal tomahawks rather than firearms.<sup>131</sup>

In traditional times weapons had much symbolic value. Some weapons were handed down from generation to generation, linking their possessor to his ancestors.<sup>132</sup> In Malaitan religion ancestral spirits were believed to be able to influence wordly affairs. Weapons, including tomahawks and firearms procured in the era of labor trade were often consecrated to ancestors.<sup>133</sup> In many ways the rifle was as much a status symbol as a weapon. Amongst the Kwaio at least, rifles were Kwanga, or lightning, — a term reflecting their awesome potential as tools of revenge. Weapons were extensions of the warriors' arm and manifestations of his potency and a sign of his manhood.<sup>134</sup>

In some parts of the Solomon Islands large numbers of firearms were accumulated by certain men.<sup>135</sup> Such caches could bring an individual a great deal of prestige and influence through their judicious redistribution within his community. By the 1890's trade goods had received equivalent values in indigenous currencies. Some goods were even being used directly in exchange systems such as bride-price payments. Rifles were amongst the items included in the latter group.<sup>136</sup>

Firearms were not exploited to anything near their full military potential despite the fact that many warriors were good marksmen.<sup>137</sup> Ivens never saw the Malaita men use sights to aim at an enemy. Sniders were often fired from the hip without any attempt to take aim. When a person was shot deliberately it was generally only because the rifle was thrust close to his body and the trigger pulled. Even at close range misses were recorded.<sup>138</sup>

On the rare occasions that general confrontations occurred rifle fire tended not to cause much damage. For example, in the sieges of Sulu Vou and Ada Gege by Funaa Vou and Manaoba in the late 1880's both sides fired many rounds of ammunition but no casualties resulted on either side. The only deaths occurred when a helpless straggler and child were discovered on the mainland opposite Ada Gege and promptly dispatched.<sup>139</sup> However, on another occasion a canoe-borne attack on Funaa Vou by Sulu Vou and its allies was driven off "with loss" by rifle fire from the shore.<sup>140</sup>

Much of the reasons for the ineffective use of firearms occurred as a result of the large degree of continuity in Malaitan attitudes to warfare. There was no need to kill more victims than was necessary for adequate satisfaction for insult or injury. To do so only invited future retaliation on a similar scale. No leader or community was able to forge any permanent political units beyond the localized level of traditional society. The power



of firearms was not enough to overcome the divisive elements of Malaitan culture. The chance of creating more centralized rule through force declined as firearms became widespread.

Some thirty years after the introduction of firearms hostilities were still being conducted along traditional patterns and for traditional reasons. On the death of Kwaisulia in 1909 Ada Gege sought revenge on the "sorcerer" who was perceived to have caused his death. The accused man was a chief of Sulu Vou, a neighboring island a few hundred yards away. This chief's community refused to hand him over, however. Every day at low tide the Ada Gege men would march out over the lagoon towards Sulu Vou and vociferously challenge the Sulu Vou people to surrender the accused man. Despite their exposed position no volleys seem to have been exchanged. Rather, the antagonists contended themselves with raids on each others' gardens. Every day envoys arrived from the bush to each island offering alliances — at a price! The accused man managed to flee from Sulu Vou until the storm blew over. Although he returned to Sulu Vou and tensions declined the threat of eventual retribution still persisted.<sup>141</sup>

As the above example shows the British declaration of a protectorate over the Solomon Islands in 1893 did not lead to an immediate end to fighting on Malaita. Coastal Malaita, with its growing Christian enclaves and rising awareness of the advantages of participating in the white man's world, became less of a problem with time for the British administration. In any case, troublesome coastal villages were relatively accessible for punitive measures. But the population of Malaita's interior caused the British authorities particular trouble. In response to perceived missionary attempts to challenge traditional ways and ideas, many inland ramo retaliated with

intimidation of Christian converts and teachers. Often this took the form of slayings.<sup>142</sup>

The efforts of the Solomon Island's administration to protect Malaita's Christian population and to "pacify" the interior was continually hampered by a lack of finances. The District Officer on Malaita had only thirty to forty native troops at his disposal. His transportation was limited to one whaleboat.<sup>143</sup> It is not surprising therefore that blood feuds continued and mission stations were raided with impunity. Almost daily Malaitan Christians fell victim to some lurking warrior. Even the District Officers' headquarters at Auki was submitted to sniping.<sup>144</sup>

Under the direction of District Officer Bell much effort was put into "pacifying" the island in the years following his arrival at Auki in 1915.<sup>145</sup> In response to this mounting pressure, and influenced by the realization that their days of autonomy were numbered, elements of the Kwaio killed Bell, his assistant, and a number of accompanying native police at Gwee'abe in October, 1927. It was a symbolic last blow for their threatened way of life and much loved independence.<sup>146</sup>

The resultant backlash brought much death and suffering to the Kwaio. A punitive expedition of Solomon island planters, naval personnel from the Australian naval vessel Adelaide and Solomon islanders soon arrived at Malaita. The European portion of this force proved ineffective in the rugged, bushclad interior so that the job of hunting down the Kwaio fugitives was soon left to native police and Melanesian volunteers.<sup>147</sup> Many of these men were from north Malaita. Their prime motivation for hunting down the Kwaio was to avenge past grievances against them rather than any feeling of loyalty to the whiteman.<sup>148</sup> They were as skilled in tracking and in bush warfare as their

quarry, <sup>149</sup> but had a major advantage in that they had been issued with modern repeating rifles. In comparison the Kwaio possessed a limited number of single shot rifles and were probably short of ammunition.<sup>150</sup> They could not hope to win a stand up fight. Their only hope of evading their foe "... lay in constant mobility; in cooking wild yams and drinking at night; and hiding in the wild bush by day..."<sup>151</sup>. With European control of field operations negligible, shrines were desecrated, pigs killed, houses burnt, women and children murdered and prisoners shot by the revenge-seeking north Malaitans.<sup>152</sup>

By the end of 1927 most or all of the Kwaio fugitives were dead or had surrendered. Many more died afterwards of dysentery while in captivity at the Protectorate's capital Tulagi. Those who remained on Malaita fared little better. Demoralized by the desecration of their shrines, and denied subsistence by the destruction of their pigs and taro many Kwaio died in the year following the bloody retribution which so brutally ended their old way of life.<sup>153</sup>

The success of the Kwaio in resisting British attempts to control them had proven to be their undoing. Remaining outside of the new emerging order, resulting from European penetration, they were placed at a major disadvantage to their coastal counterparts, who gained a decisive lead in coming to terms with the whiteman's ways. The Kwaio could not win; their resistance merely delayed an inevitable process. The final blow came when their traditional rivals combined with a global power and its superior technology of destruction to attack a common foe whose cultural conservatism had incurred their hostility.

The Malaitan response to firearms does much to support the conclusions of Shineberg and Howe. Despite the dramatic improvement of firearms technology,

the use of guns in indigenous fighting on Malaita was successfully modified to suit traditional attitudes towards warfare in the late part of the Nineteenth Century. While the function of warfare remained the same, the form of warfare required modification to accommodate the use of firearms. Specific case studies, be they temporal and/or spatial, run the risk of presenting a false impression of the wider reality. Case studies must be viewed in a more generalized context to reveal their real significance. Malaitans were now more dependent on an external source of supply for their favored weaponry. Their suppliers had differing attitudes and objectives. This was merely one aspect of a general era of change as European penetration progressed. Pacific islanders could still have much influence over their own destiny. But if the initial cultural resilience that many displayed was not followed by cultural adaptation and flexibility in the long term, very real problems loomed in the future.<sup>154</sup>

### ABBREVIATIONS

J.P.H. = Journal of Pacific History

W.P.H.-I.C. = West Pacific High Commission-Inward Correspondence

### NOTES

This paper was researched and written in the Fall Semester of 1985 and the Spring Semester of 1986 using material from the Pacific Collection of the Hamilton Library, University of Hawaii. The staff of the Pacific Collection have been very helpful during this time. The other contributors to this monograph and Dr. Brij Lal made useful comments on earlier drafts of this paper. I am grateful for their constructive criticism.

1. H.M. Wright, New Zealand, 1769-1840: Early Years of Western Contact, (Cambridge, Mass., 1959), Chapters 4, 5, and 8, and Alan Moorehead, The Fatal Impact: An Account of the Invasion of the South Pacific 1767-1840, (Harmondsworth, 1968), pp. 83-95.
2. Notable examples of works characterized by this "revisionist" approach include Dorothy Shineberg's They Came for Sandalwood: A Study of the Sandalwood Trade in the South West Pacific 1830-1865, (Melbourne, 1967). Peter Corris' Passage, Port and Plantation: A History of Solomon Islands Labour Migration 1870-1914, (Melbourne, 1973) and K.R. Howe's The Loyalty Islands: A History of Culture Contacts 1840-1900, (Canberra, 1977).
3. Dorothy Shineberg "Guns and Men in Melanesia", J.P.H. vol. 6, (1971), p. 61.
4. See illustration one for the mechanics of firearms.
5. Shineberg "Guns and Men", pp. 71-72. A culverin was a piece of light artillery.
6. Shineberg "Guns and Men", pp. 73-74.
7. Shineberg, "Guns and Men", pp. 73.
8. Shineberg, "Guns and Men", pp. 80-81.
9. Dorothy Shineberg, "The Sandalwood Trade in Melanesian Economics, 1841-65", J.P.H. vol. 1, pp. 137-8.
10. Shineberg, They Came for Sandalwood, pp. 152-3.
11. K.R. Howe, "Firearms and Indigenous Warfare: A Case Study", J.P.H., vol. 9(1974), p. 38.
12. Howe, "Firearms and Indigenous Warfare", p. 38.

13. Howe, "Firearms and Indigenous Warfare", p. 31.
14. Howe, "Firearms and Indigenous Warfare", p. 36-38.
15. Peter Corris and Roger M. Keesing, Lightning Meets the West Wind - The Malaita Massacre, (Oxford, 1980).
16. The evolution of firearms is discussed later in this paper pp. 6-7.
17. For the brigantines' encounters with Malaitans see Lord Amherst and B. Thomson, The Discovery of the Solomon Islands by Alvaro de Mendana in 1568, vol. 1, pp. 45-48 (Gallego's narrative) and C. Jack-Hinton, The Search for the Islands of Solomon 1567-1838, (Oxford, 1969), pp. 46-61.
18. For example, in describing the Malaitan's first encounter with the Spanish the Report to Mendana states that after being shot at the Malaitans "fled back again" (p. 45). Catoira's narrative, by far the most detailed account of the three, implies the Malaitans only slowly retired after one of their number was shot, and that it required a second volley to make them withdraw (pp. 281-2).
19. Malaitans were shot during the first encounter and the third one at the southern end of Maramasike passage. But in the encounter between these two the local Malaitans fled upon receiving a volley that did not kill anyone. (Catoira's Narrative, p. 283).
20. Helen Wallis (ed.), Carteret's Voyage Round the World 1766-1769 (vol. 1), (Cambridge, 1967), p. 174, and Jack-Hinton The Search for the Islands of Solomon, p. 250.
21. Wallis, Carteret's Voyage, p. 175.
22. C.E. Fox, The Story of the Solomons, Revised Edition, (Sydney, 1975), p. 11.
23. J. Dunmore, ed., The Expedition of the St. Jean-Baptiste in the Pacific 1769-1770 (London, 1981), p. 215. (Labe's account).
24. For example, see Amherst and Thomson, The Discovery of the Solomon Islands, pp. 47-48.
25. Dunmore, The Expedition of the St. Jean-Baptiste, pp. 113-4 (Survillie) and pp. 217-8 (Labe).
26. Dunmore, The Expedition of the St. Jean-Baptiste, p. 111 (Survillie) and p. 215 (Labe).
27. Jack-Hinton The Search for the Islands of Solomon, pp. 310-343; Fox, The Story of the Solomons, pp. 11-13; Corris, Passage, Port and Plantation, pp. 6-15.

28. Corris, Passage, Port and Plantation, pp. 24, 29, 31.
29. Corris, Passage, Port and Plantation, p. 37.
30. Good sources for the evolution of European military firearms are H.C.B. Rogers, Weapons of the British Soldier (London, 1960); D.R. Headrick The Tools of Empire—Technology and European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century (Oxford, 1981); H.L. Blackmore, British Military Firearms from Earliest Times to 1914, (London, 1955); T.H. McGuffie, "Musket and Rifle," in History Today, vol. 7(4), 1957, pp. 257-63, vol. 7(7), 1957, pp. 473-79.
31. P. D'Arcy, The Impact of Firearms on Polynesian Warfare, unpublished B.A. Honors Dissertation, University of Otago, (N.Z.), 1984, pp. 38-41.
32. D'Arcy, The Impact of Firearms, pp. 43-44; Headrick, The Tools of Empire, pp. 97-98.
33. Headrick, The Tools of Empire, p. 98.
34. Headrick, The Tools of Empire, p. 98-101.
35. Headrick, The Tools of Empire, p. 97.
36. D'Arcy, The Impact of Firearms, p. 38.
37. Headrick, The Tools of Empire, pp. 97-98.
38. Corris, Passage, Port and Plantation, p. 37.
39. Mackay Mercury, April 6, 1878, cited in Corris, Passage, Port and Plantation, p. 37.
40. D. Scarr, Fragments of Empire - A History of the Western Pacific High Commission 1877-1914 (Canberra, 1967), pp. 189-90.
41. Corris, Passage, Port and Plantation, p. 38, and W.T. Wawn, The South Sea Islanders and the Queensland Labour Trade, P. Corris ed., (Canberra, 1973), p. 310, and Scarr, Fragments of Empire, p. 196, who cites Thurston in 1886 as saying that the ban was not working as non-British traders were filling the vacuum created by this restriction on British traders.
42. Corris, Passage, Port and Plantation, p. 112.
43. D. Scarr, "Recruits and Recruiters: A Portrait of the Labour Trade", J.P.H., vol. 2, p. 7.
44. Wawn, The South Sea Islanders, pp. 151-2, 310, pp. 358-9.
45. Corris, Passage, Port and Plantation, p. 112.

46. Moore to Erskine, 7 November 1888, Royal Navy Australian Squadron XVI, in D. Scarr, Fragments of Empire, p. 139.
47. Great Britain - Parliamentary Papers; Western Pacific--Correspondence Relating to Proposals for an International Agreement Regulating the Supply of Arms, Ammunition, Alcohol, and Dynamite to Natives of the Western Pacific, vol. 38, (1887), p. 37.
48. Wawn, The South Sea Islanders, pp. 358, p. 425.
49. C.M. Woodford, Report on the British Solomon Islands Presented to Parliament April 1897, Colonial Reports, misc. no. 8, Western Pacific, p. 25.
50. Corris, Passage, Port and Plantation, p. 148.
51. Corris and Keesing, Lightning Meets the West Wind, p. 76.
52. W.G. Ivens, The Island Builders of the Pacific (London, 1930), p. 42.
53. Scarr, "Recruits and Recruiters", p. 22.
54. Wawn, The South Sea Islanders, p. 310.
55. Moore to Erskine, 7 November 1888 in Scarr, Fragments of Empire, p. 139.
56. Great Britain, Parl. Papers, 1887, p. 37.
57. Wawn, The South Sea Islanders, p. 358, p. 425; Woodford, Report on the British Solomon Islands, (1898), p. 25; Corris and Keesing, Lightning Meets the West Wind, p. 9.
58. J.B. Thurston, Great Britain - Parl. Papers, 1887, p. 1. See also Romilly, p. 5 and Selwyn, p. 37 of the same Parl. Paper. In later years, Ivens made similar judgements (Island Builders, p. 23, 43.)
59. Scarr, Fragments of Empire, p. 190.
60. Corris, Passage, Port and Plantation, p. 112, Scarr "Recruits and Recruiters", p. 22. Shineberg "Sandalwood Trade in Melanesian Economics", pp. 137-8 gives opinions of the time supporting both sides of the argument.
61. See Amherst and Thomson, The Discovery of the Solomon Islands, p. 45, 47, 179, 283, 356, 406, Wallis, Carteret's Voyage, p. 175, Dunmore, The Expedition of the St. Jean-Baptiste, pp. 192-6, 207, 217, D. Rannie My Adventure Among South Sea Cannibals (London, 1912), pp. 30-37, C.M. Woodford A Naturalist Among the Headhunters (London, 1890), pp. 29-30, Iven, Island Builders, pp. 178-85.
62. See illustration two.



63. For an account of this fight see Dunmore, The Expedition of the St. Jean-Baptiste, pp. 195-6.
64. For example, see Rannie My Adventures, p. 117, Amherst and Thomson, The Discovery of the Solomon Islands, p. 181, J. Boutilier "Killing the Government: Imperial Policy and the Pacification of Malaita" in The Pacification of Melanesia M. Rodman and M. Cooper, eds. 1972, p. 48.
65. Boutilier "Killing the Government", pp.45-6, Corris, Passage Port and Plantation, pp. 16-20, Iven, Island Builders, p. 17,33, A.I. Hopkins, In the Isles of King Solomon (London, 1928), p. 138.
66. Corris, Passage, Port and Plantation, p. 21, Boutilier, "Killing the Government", p. 9, Ivens, Island Builders p. 17.
67. P. Corris, "Kwaisulia of Ada Gege - A Strongman in the Soloman Islands" in Pacific Island Portraits, J.W. Davidson and D. Scarr, eds., (Canberra, 1970),p. 254.
68. Iven, Island Builders, p. 184.
69. J.G. Marwick, compilers, The Adventures of John Renton (Great Britain, 1935), p. 30, Woodford, A Naturalist Among the Head Hunters, p. 9, pp. 16-17, Corris, Passage, Port and Plantation, p. 17, Hopkins, In the Isles, p. 140, 152, Corris, "Kwaisulia", p. 254.
70. Hopkins, In the Isles, p. 211, Ivens, Island Builders, p. 185, Marwick, John Renton, p. 34.
71. Corris, "Kwaisulia", p. 254.
72. Ivens, Island Builders, pp. 196-7, Hopkins, In the Isles, pp. 168-73.
73. Ivens, Island Builders, pp. 198-99.
74. C.H. Wedgewood, "Some Aspects of Warfare in Melanesia", Oceania, vol. 1, p. 6
75. Ivens, Island Builders, pp. 198-9.
76. Hopkins, In the Isles, pp. 168-70, 181.
77. Hopkins, In the Isles, p. 169, pp. 177-78, Ivens, Island Builders, p. 196, Wedgewood, "Warfare in Melanesia", p. 15.
78. Hopkins, In the Isles, pp. 178-9, Ivens, Island Builders, p. 196, Woodford, A Naturalist Among the Head Hunters, p. 43, Marwick, John Renton, p. 30, 35, 187.
79. Woodford, A Naturalist Among the Head Hunters, p. 43.

80. Marwick, John Renton, pp. 34-35. See also Ivens, Island Builders, p. 195, and Hopkins, In the Isles, p. 176.
81. Ivens, Island Builders, pp. 90-91, 195-6.
82. Wedgewood, "Warfare in Melanesia", pp. 24-5.
83. Hopkins, In the Isles, p. 174.
84. Corris, Passage, Port and Plantation, p. 20, Boutilier, "Killing the Government", p. 46.
85. Corris and Keesing, Lightning Meets the West Wind, pp. 17-23, Ivens, Island Builders, pp. 199-200.
86. Great Britain Parl. Paper 1887, p. 37, Scarr, "Recruits and Recruiters", p. 22, Boutilier, "Killing the Government", p. 7, Corris, Passage, Port and Plantation, pp. 37-8, Ivens, Island Builders, p. 198.
87. Corris, Passage, Port and Plantation, p. 61, Corris, "Kwaisulia", pp. 255-57.
88. Corris, "Kwaisulia", p. 260, Rannie, My Adventures, p. 183, Ivens, Island Builders, p. 199.
89. Corris, "Kwaisulia", p. 255, pp. 260-64.
90. For Billy Mahualla, see Wawn, The South Sea Islanders, p. 414 and Corris, Islanders, p. 405, and Corris, Passage, Port and Plantation, p. 65.
91. Corris, "Kwaisulia", p. 256.
92. Journal of F.P. Bevan of the Winifred, 9,11 Nov. 1883, in Corris, Passage, Port and Plantation, p. 37.
93. Corris, Passage, Port and Plantation, p. 35, p. 37.
94. Wawn, The South Sea Islanders, p. 407.
95. For example, Wawn, The South Sea Islanders, p. 353, p. 425.
96. Scarr, "Recruits and Recruiters", p. 22, Wawn, The South Sea Islanders, p. 358, 425.
97. Corris, "Kwaisulia", p. 260ff.
98. Rogers, Weapons of the British Soldier, p. 154.
99. Ivens, Island Builders, p. 191.

100. Corris and Keesing, Lightning Meets the West Wind, p. 117.
101. Corris and Keesing, Lightning Meets the West Wind, p. 117.
102. Cited in Corris and Keesing, Lightning Meets the West Wind, p. 76.
103. Ivens, Island Builders, p. 191.
104. Corris and Keesing, Lightning Meets the West Wind, p. 116.
105. Corris and Keesing, Lightning Meets the West Wind, p. 42.
106. Corris and Keesing, Lightning Meets the West Wind, p. 76.
107. Corris, Passage, Port and Plantation, p. 112; Scarr, "Recruits and Recruiters", p. 22.
108. Ivens, Island Builders, p. 45.
109. Wilson to Woodford, 6 October 1906, WPHC, IC 4/1907 - cited in Boutilier, "Killing the Government" as part of footnote 16 to p. 52.
110. Ivens, Island Builders, p. 91.
111. Ivens, Island Builders, p. 7.
112. Corris, Passage, Port and Plantation, p. 137.
113. Ivens, Island Builders, p. 200.
114. D'Arcy, The Impact of Firearms on Polynesian Warfare, pp. 145-146.
115. Marwick, John Renton, p. 34; Ivens, Island Builders, p. 191.
116. Ivens, Island Builders, p. 191.
117. Marwick, John Renton, p. 34.
118. Ivens, Island Builders, p. 53.
119. Hopkins, In the Isles, pp. 143-4.
120. Rennie, My Adventures, pp. 182-3; Wawn, The South Sea Islanders, p. 407.
121. Ivens, Island Builders, p. 190.
122. Marwick, John Renton, pp. 52-3.
123. Ivens, Island Builders, p. 58; Marwick, John Renton, p. 24.
124. Ivens, Island Builders, p. 191.

125. Marwick, John Renton, pp. 34-5; Ivens, Island Builders, pp. 188-92.
126. Ivens, Island Builders, p. 190.
127. Hopkins, In the Isles, p. 176.
128. For example, see Hopkins, In the Isles, pp. 171-3; Ivens, Island Builders, p. 200; Corris and Keesing, Lightning Meets the West Wind, p. 20.
129. Corris and Keesing, Lightning Meets the West Wind, p. 20.
130. Corris and Keesing, Lightning Meets the West Wind, p. 1.
131. For examples, see Rannie, My Adventures, pp. 180-81, 189, 191, 263-64 for 1886. Rannie also gives a good account of the massacre of the crew of the Young Dick in 1884 (p. 203). Also see Wawn, The South Sea Islanders, pp. 418-9 for attack on vessels at Manoaba in 1888.
132. Ivens, Island Builders, p. 112.
133. For example, Marwick, John Renton, p. 30; Corris and Keesing, Lightning Meets the West Wind, p. 117, mention the consecration of weapons to ancestors. Ivens, Island Builders, pp. 129-33; Hopkins, In the Isles, p. 205, and Corris and Keesing, Lightning Meets the West Wind, p. 8 discuss the Malaitan perception of their ancestor spirits.
134. Ivens cited in Corris, Passage, Port and Plantation, p. 112; Corris and Keesing, Lightning Meets the West Wind, pp. 9, 116-7.
135. For example, see Great Britain, Parl. Report, 1887, p. 3 (Melbourne Argus, 26 January 1884 cited) and p. 39 (Bishop Selwyn).
136. Corris, Passage, Port and Plantation, pp. 113-4.
137. Corris and Keesing, Lightning Meets the West Wind, p. 20 make the point that many Malaitans were good marksmen.
138. Ivens, Island Builders, p. 191.
139. Ivens, Island Builders, p. 191. In A Naturalist Among Head Hunters, Woodford refers to a battle on Savo between Savo men and bush peoples from Guadalcanal in which a bush chief called Sulakava rushed into the midst of the Savo men, but remained uninjured, despite the fact that his enemy are said to have fired 40 revolver shots and 60 rifle shots at him from close range (p. 185).
140. Ivens, Island Builders, p. 191.
141. Hopkins, In the Isles, p. 158-59.

142. Corris and Keesing, Lightning Meets the West Wind, pp. 12-14; Boutilier, "Killing the Government", pp. 52-62.
143. Corris and Keesing, Lightning Meets the West Wind, pp. 4, 43; Boutilier, "Killing the Government", pp. 56-59.
144. Boutilier, "Killing the Government", pp. 56-64.
145. Ivens, Island Builders, p. 45; Corris and Keesing, Lightning Meets the West Wind, chapter 6; Boutilier, "Killing the Government", pp. 62-74.
146. Corris and Keesing, Lightning Meets the West Wind, chapter 9.
147. For the campaign up until the withdrawal of the white component from field operations, see Corris and Keesing, Lightning Meets the West Wind, pp. 155-64.
148. Corris and Keesing, Lightning Meets the West Wind, p. 158.
149. Corris and Keesing, Lightning Meets the West Wind, p. 165.
150. Corris and Keesing, Lightning Meets the West Wind, p. 135.
151. Corris and Keesing, Lightning Meets the West Wind, p. 165.
152. Corris and Keesing, Lightning Meets the West Wind, pp. 165-70.
153. Corris and Keesing, Lightning Meets the West Wind, pp. 178, 183.
154. This trend towards a balance between the fatal impact thesis and the revisionist argument of islander resilience and adaptation has been noticable in recent years. In particular, Greg Denning's Islands and Beaches: Discourse on a Silent Land, Marquesas 1774-1880, (Melbourne, 1980) did much to counter the trend towards emphasizing islander resistance to European inroads by showing the very real violence and disruption that occurred in the Marquesas.

# BIBLIOGRAPHY

## PRIMARY SOURCES:

- Amherst, Lord, & Thomson, B., (eds.) The Discovery of the Solomon Islands by Alvaro de Mendana in 1568 (2 vols), London, 1901.
- Codrington, R.H., The Melanesians, Oxford, 1891.
- Dunmore, J., (ed), The Expedition of the St. Jean-Baptiste to the Pacific 1769-1770, London, 1981.
- Great Britain - Parliamentary Papers; Western Pacific - Correspondence relating to Proposals for an International agreement regulating the supply of arms, ammunition, alcohol, and dynamite to Natives of the Western Pacific, (Vol. 38), 1887.
- Hopkins, A.I., In the Isles of King Solomon, London, 1928.
- Ivens, W.G., The Islands Builders of the Pacific, London, 1930.
- Marwick, J.G. (Compiler), The Adventures of John Renton, Great Britain, 1935.
- Rannie, D., My Adventures among South Sea Cannibals, London, 1912.
- Wallis, H. (ed) Carteret's Voyage Around the World 1766 - 1769, (vol. 1), Cambridge, 1965.
- Wawn, W.T., The South Sea Islanders and Queensland Labour Trade, Pacific History Series No. 5 - P. Corris (ed), Canberra, 1973.
- Woodford, C.M., A Naturalist Among the Head-Hunters, London, 1890.
- Woodford, C.M., Report on the British Solomon Islands presented to Parliament April 1897, Colonial Reports - Misc. No. 8, Western Pacific.

## SECONDARY SOURCES

- Boutilier, J., "Killing the Government: Imperial Policy and the Pacification of Malaita", The Pacification of Melanesia, M. Rodman and M. Cooper (eds), Lanham (U.S.A.), 1972, pp. 43-88.
- Corris, P., "Kwaisulia of Ada Gege - A Strong Men in the Solomon Islands," Pacific Island Portraits, J.W. Davidson and D. Scarr (eds), Canberra, 1970.
- Corris, P., Passage, Port and Plantation: A History of Solomon Island Labour Migration 1870-1914, Australia, 1973.
- Corris, P., and Keesing, R.M., Lightning Meets the West Wind - The Malaita Massacre, Oxford, 1980.

D'Arcy, P.C., "The Impact of Firearms on Polynesian Warfare," Unpublished B.A. Hons Dissertation, University of Otago (N.Z.), 1984.

Fox, C.E., The Story of the Solomons, (revised edition), Sydney, 1975.

Headrick, D.R., The Tools of Empire - Technology and European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century, Oxford, 1981.

Howe, K.R., "Firearms and Indigenous Warfare: A Case Study," J.P.H. Vol. 9, 1974, pp. 21-38.

Jack-Hinton, C., The Search for the Islands of Solomon 1567 - 1838, Oxford, 1969.

Moorehead, A., The Fatal Impact: An Account of the Invasion of the South Pacific 1767 - 1840, Harmondsworth, 1968.

Rogers, H.C.B., Weapons of the British Soldier, London, 1960.

Scarr, D., Fragments of Empire - A History of the Western Pacific High Commission 1877 - 1914, Canberra, 1957.

Scarr, D., "Recruits and Recruiters: A Portrait of the Labour Trade," J.P.H., Vol. 2, 1967, pp. 5-24.

Shineberg, D., They Came for Sandalwood: A Study of the Sandalwood Trade in the South West Pacific 1830 - 1865, Melbourne, 1967.

Shineberg, D., "Guns and Men in Melanesia," J.P.H., Vol. 6, 1971, pp. 61-82.

Shineberg, D., "The Sandalwood Trade in Melanesian Economics, 1841-65," J.P.H., Vol. 1, 1966, pp. 129-46.

Wedgewood, C.H., "Some Aspects of Warfare in Melanesia," Oceania, vol. 1, 1930, pp. 5-33.

Wright, H.M., New Zealand 1769 - 1840: Early Years of Western Contact, Cambridge, Mass., 1959.

KASTOM VERSUS CROSS: A BATTLE FOR CULTURAL HEGEMONY ON TANNA<sup>1</sup>

David J. Richardson

Highlighted by rebellion, punctuated by violence, the transition from the Anglo-French Condominium of the New Hebrides to the independent Republic of Vanuatu was complicated, turbulent and passionate. To understand the reasons for the deep divisions surfacing with Vanuatu's emergence in 1980, it is helpful to look to the past.

On the eve of independence, open rebellion threatened to undermine the integrity of the central government of the ruling Vanua'aku Party, an anglophone party led by Walter Lini, an Anglican Priest. On 28 May 1980, Jimmy Stevens, leader of the indigenous movement known as Nagriamel, proclaimed the establishment of the Vemarana Federation on Espiritu Santo, the largest island in the archipelago. This secessionist attempt was supported by settlers of French ancestry, the French Residency and a group of free-enterprise fanatics from the United States known as the Phoenix Foundation. The rebellion on Santo lasted until 31 August, put down by troops from Papua new Guinea at the request of the central government of Vanuatu, which became officially independent on 30 July 1980.

Elsewhere in the archipelago, on Tanna, another rebellion was staged. On 15 February 1980, during celebrations at Sulphur Bay, headquarters of the John Frum movement - a movement which began as a cargo cult and later became institutionalized as a church and political party - the flags of France and the United States were hoisted.

Also raised was the flag of the newly proclaimed TAFEA Federation, taking its name from the first letters of the islands making it up: Tanna, Aniwa,



Futuna, Erromanga, and Aneityam. On this day kastom gavman was declared, that is, government based on indigenous customary ways. This phase of rebellion on Tanna climaxed on the night of 10 June 1980 in a confrontation at the government station at Isangel in which 300 TAFEA supporters were routed by a British Mobile Force and supporters of the Vanau'aku Party.

While selected events related to Vanuatu's troubled transition to independence have received a great deal of attention, the origins of the problem have not. Moreover, while much has been made of the activities on Santo, located to the northwest in the archipelago, far less has been written about the dynamics of rebellion on the southern island of Tanna. This tendency is best illustrated by the use of the term "Santo Rebellion" under which all anti-government activity coinciding with independence is frequently lumped. This convenient, but inaccurate, characterization overlooks important dimensions of Vanuatu's history: at the time of independence and before.

A clear understanding of the reasons underlying the turmoil of the time is hindered by simplistic assumptions of outside manipulation. This is suggested by John Beasant's The Santo Rebellion, An Imperial Reckoning.<sup>2</sup> This book focuses on Santo and the role of outside influences in the process of decolonization. The Santo Rebellion is consistent with much of what has been written about the process of decolonization in Vanuatu in its approach and perspective, representing a trend which is both misleading and incomplete. This paper suggests that the process by which Vanuatu became independent was not an imperial reckoning: it was an indigenous reckoning.

Anti-government activity on Tanna has been largely overlooked, or dismissed as the result of a bizarre cargo cult having been duped by outsiders. This paper suggests that those who rebelled were not victims of

cunning sophisticates from abroad; rather, rebellion on Tanna was a by-product of conflicts with roots deep in the soil of the island's history. This paper examines Tanna as a battleground: between Christianity and traditional customary ways and between the rival European culture systems represented by the influence of the Condominium Government. It is naive to assume that outside influences did not play a significant role in rebellion in Vanuatu, or in the post-contact era of Vanuatu's history; however, by focusing on indigenous motives for rebellion on Tanna the active agency of those who resisted the government is clearly visible: indeed, it is not altogether clear just who was manipulating whom.

Vanuatu is an archipelago of over eighty islands covering 5,700 square miles. The people, known as ni-Vanuatu, speak over 100 different indigenous languages in addition to the languages of Britain and France. Bislama, or pidgin, is derived largely from English; it incorporates words from French and various ni-Vanuatu languages in a Melanesian syntax, providing a medium of communication comprehensible to all the indigenous inhabitants of the islands.<sup>3</sup> Vanuatu is typically melanesian in its cultural diversity. Indigenous political organization was characterized by decentralization: numerous, small, autonomous groupings - frequently, though perhaps not entirely accurately - described by Europeans as "tribes."<sup>4</sup>

Much of the archipelago was originally mistaken for a continent by the first Europeans to visit in 1606, when a Spanish expedition commanded by Pedro Fernandez de Quiros passed through the northerly Banks Islands and established the ill-fated colony of "New Jerusalem" on Espiritu Santo.<sup>5</sup> It was not until 1774, with the arrival of Captain James Cook, that Europeans would become familiar with the entire archipelago; under Cook the Islands were first

circumnavigated, charted and named the "New Hebrides." It was during this voyage that Ipari - as the island was known by people of neighboring islands - came to be known as Tanna, a term used by the island's inhabitants to mean "earth."<sup>6</sup>

Tanna is a volcanic island with very rich, fertile soil. It is well watered and well wooded. Most contact with the outside world did not occur until after 1840. Stands of sandalwood attracted traders in that commodity; the anchorage at Port Resolution attracted ships which stopped to resupply. Ron Adams notes in his monograph, In the Land of Strangers, the European willingness to exchange goods with the Tannese, whose social relations were characterized by reciprocity, placed European traders into a recognizable niche within the context of an indigenous ritual framework;<sup>7</sup> however, Europeans who came bearing what they called a message of salvation - rather than tobacco, muskets and other trade goods - were received less than graciously by a people apparently satisfied with their existing religious beliefs.

The first Protestant efforts on Tanna, however, appeared promising. The London Missionary Society left three Samoan teachers on the island on 18 November 1839. John Williams, the famed missionary of the London Missionary Society (LMS), left Lalolangi, Mose and Salamea on Tanna along with a large quantity of fish-hooks, scissors and other items; the Tannese reciprocated with a gift of some pigs. Although the overall foray into the archipelago had tragic results - Williams and a companion were clubbed to death and most likely eaten on Erromanga the day after they left Tanna - the Samoans were relatively successful on Tanna: initially. They were joined by more Samoan teachers in the following year; however, malaria took the lives of several of

the teachers and caused a great deal of suffering among the survivors. Illness and death undermined the credibility of the Christian deity in the eyes of the Tannese as they watched the teachers suffer. More teachers were landed on Tanna in 1841; and in 1842 the LMS landed the missionaries George Turner and Henry Nisbet and their spouses on Tanna.<sup>8</sup> In spite of the promising indications with the first arrival of John Williams in 1839 on Tanna, Turner and Nisbet and their wives were only able to remain on the island for seven months. They were forced to flee for their lives, along with all the teachers, escaping on a passing whaling vessel. The only Christian presence in the archipelago was on Aneityam, south of Tanna, where some teachers were able to remain. All those left on the other islands were either killed or driven out.

It was from Aneityam that the next attempts to spread Christianity to Tanna would be launched. It was an island seen as well placed with respect to the other islands in the vicinity. The Reverend John Geddie of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Nova Scotia came to be known as the father of the Presbyterian Church of the New Hebrides. Geddie established a mission on Aneityam in 1848. Geddie's success is perhaps the result of his relatively rapid acquisition of the local language and his awareness of local taboos. By 1852 a church had been formed, and by 1856 a large percentage of the population of Aneityam was under Presbyterian instruction.<sup>9</sup>

From the strategically located island of Aneityam, the battle for the souls of the Tannese was launched in 1858. The Reverend John G. Paton, of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland, was appointed to set up a mission at Port Resolution; the Reverend J.W. Matheson, of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Nova Scotia, was to establish a mission at Kwamera (Umairarekar); Joseph Copeland, of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland, was to

shuttle between these two sites, providing assistance as needed.<sup>10</sup> Sites for houses at both locations were easily acquired; it appeared the missionaries would be made welcome. However, commenting on the initially favorable response they received, Paton observed:

"Perhaps it was with an eye to the axes, knives, fishhooks, blankets, and clothing, which they got in payment, or hoped for in plunder, rather than from any thirst for the Gospel, as they were all Savages and Cannibals."<sup>11</sup>

It is reasonable to assume that Paton's suspicions regarding the motives of these "savages and cannibals" were correct. The failure of Presbyterian efforts during this phase of contact (1858-1862) suggests that their presence was tolerated for reasons other than the appeal of their Christian message. This assessment is strengthened in light of Paton's further writings. In 1860, following one of many reported attempts on his life, the missionary noted that his flock had decided to kill him; however:

"If I would give up visiting the villages, and praying and talking with them about Jehovah, they intimidated that they would like me to stay and trade with them, as they liked the Traders but hated the Missionaries."<sup>12</sup>

The Tannese viewed Paton as a potential source of valuable trade items; however, their reasons for wanting him to quit preaching included the awkward situation his activities placed them with respect to their traditional beliefs. Adams notes:

"It would seem that the Tannese feared not to propitiate Jehovah and, at the same time, believed that his worship offended their customary dieties, who displayed their displeasure by causing illness and death..."<sup>13</sup>

Impacting on this difficult situation was the stand of Paton and Presbyterians on most of the traditional, customary ways - or, kastom in Bislama - of the Tannese. Kastom included practices such as pig killing, the strangling of widows and kava drinking. Most practices associated with kastom

were viewed with revulsion by the Presbyterian missionaries as inimical to the Christian message. The implications of this conflict ran deep; to appreciate how deep, it is useful to examine one aspect of kastom, kava drinking. Monty Lindstrom, a noted anthropologist who has worked a great deal on Tanna, highlights the importance of kava (*Piper Methysticum*) to Tannese society when he observes that "a useful means to gauge the significance of something in Tannese culture is to hold it up to the mirror of kava." Lindstrom notes that kava is an important element in dispute settlement, providing the principal exchange good by which harmonious relations are restored.<sup>14</sup>

Kava was important in terms of facilitating social harmony as noted above; however, its significance runs deeper. Lindstrom illustrates the importance of kava in terms of Tannese consciousness with his observations dealing with relative time conceptions. He observes that the waking day is divided into "ordinary time" and "kava time":

"Ordinary time consists of the everyday pull and tug of social relations, of disputes, of exchanges, of status competition and big men..."

"A second sort of time, which might be called kava time, is one of male solidarity and commensality, the sharing of food and kava, personal introspection and contemplation and communication with one's ancestors."<sup>15</sup>

Another perspective of "kava time" is found in The New Hebrides South Sea Islands Quarterly Jottings of "The John G. Paton Mission Fund" for the Evangelization of the remaining Cannibals on these Islands in 1896:

"Every afternoon about four o'clock they assemble for kava drinking, and for hours after it they are in a sort of stupor. This custom is one great obstacle to the progress of the Gospel on Tanna."<sup>16</sup>

The incompatibility of much of kastom with attitudes of the Presbyterians cast Christianity and kastom into opposing camps. Opposition to kastom put prospective converts to Christianity in a dilemma; to attain eternal life

necessitated the rejection of the customary ways which had hitherto given life meaning. To reject kastom was to reject one's ancestors and therefore one's identity.<sup>17</sup> The lurid images of divine retribution for the recalcitrant served to intensify the pressure on the Tannese by missionaries in the Calvinistic tradition of the Reformed Presbyterian Church.

According to Paton, the withdrawal of the missionaries from Tanna in 1862, ending a trying period begun in 1858, was precipitated by militant opposition to the mission.<sup>18</sup> However, Paton and Geddie disagreed on this point. Geddie interpreted the turbulence at the time of withdrawal not as opposition to the mission, but as a result of internal rivalries involving supporters and opponents of the mission.<sup>19</sup>

Tanna ultimately became a battle ground on several levels: between western and indigenous cultures initially, then between indigenous Christians and those who rejected the Christian message as inimical to kastom; in the background an ongoing battle between rival European cultures went through various manifestations. It is to this dimension we now turn.

Late-nineteenth century imperial rivalry in the Pacific had far-reaching impact on the political future of the archipelago. Vanuatu's proximity to New Caledonia accentuated its value as a source of land and labor to colonial advocates in France. This proximity was not lost on the colonists of Australia, and some politicians used the fear of a flood of French convicts to strengthen their advocacy of British annexation. Roger Thompson illuminates the intricacies of the New Hebrides issue in Australian politics in his Australian Imperialism in the Pacific, The Expansionist Era, 1820-1920.<sup>20</sup> Inability to come to mutually agreeable terms on the future political status of the New Hebrides led to the establishment of the Anglo-French Joint Naval

Commission in 1888. This was a political expedient designed to protect lives and property of British and French citizens. Ongoing rivalry precluded either side from gaining political ascendancy in the archipelago. The Entente Cordiale of 1904, which recognized spheres of colonial influence between Britain and France, ultimately resulted in the establishment of the Anglo-French Condominium in 1906.<sup>21</sup>

The arrangement by which the New Hebrides became a region of joint influence represented a stalemate in the struggle for cultural and political hegemony in the Southwest Pacific between English and French speaking peoples. While facilitating political and diplomatic arrangements in other spheres, it left the archipelago with deep divisions resulting from the practical realities of dual administration by representatives of rival European cultures. While Britain and France were the principal negotiating entities, there were significant elements impinging on their positions, some more tangible than others. French motives in the group were influenced by a colonial ideology buttressed by perceived cultural obligations to spread the glories of French culture on a universal scale. The universalism of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution are reflected in the mission civilisatrice, a civilizing mission designed to extend and maintain French culture on a global scale.<sup>22</sup> This preoccupation has been called "one of the most deeply rooted traditions of the Quai d'Orsay since Louis XIV's policy of prestige and 'magnificence'."<sup>23</sup> Henri Brunswig has asserted that the quest for international prestige was the driving force of French imperialism from 1871 to 1914.<sup>24</sup> The grandeur that was tarnished by defeat in the Franco-Prussian War in 1871 and diplomatic frustrations resulting from the Anglo-French agreements over Africa in 1890-1 served to increase French



appetites for the compensations of empire. Moral justifications included the idea that imperialism was essentially a humanitarian endeavor toward economic progress, peace and civilization.

This "humanitarian duty" was articulated via the doctrine of assimilation.<sup>25</sup> It is a doctrine variously interpreted; however, essentially the colony was to transcend vast distances and significant differences of race and cultural values to ultimately become an integral part of France. The people and the societies they lived in would reflect the image of the "mother country" to the degree possible. It was attractive to colonial apologists, accommodating egalitarianism, cultural imperialism and the uniform application of policy.<sup>26</sup> However, by the end of the 19th Century, the doctrine of assimilation fell into disrepute among theorists due to perceptions of excessive paternalism. The diversity of the French Empire by the early 20th Century stimulated a new colonial doctrine: association.<sup>27</sup>

The doctrine of association made allowances for indigenous institutions, providing a theoretical basis for their appreciation and preservation.<sup>28</sup> While it was adopted as the official colonial doctrine of France after World War I, it has been argued that the doctrine was merely an expedient: the creation of cultural replicas for eventual incorporation into the metropole continued to define the essence of the French colonial mission.<sup>29</sup> However, the rebellion on Tanna suggests a degree of legitimacy for the doctrine of association, but with some interesting twists, as will be shown.

In terms of geo-politics, official French interest in the islands was stimulated by economic arguments advanced by colonists in the neighboring colony of New Caledonia and by fears the colony would be encircled by appendages of the British Empire in the region.<sup>30</sup>

England's motives in the group were primarily generated by those same appendages of empire which gave France pause. Missionaries such as John Paton capitalized on existing sentiment in Australia with regard to the New Hebrides in pushing for British annexation. Paton personally lobbied hard, as did commercial interests in Australia.<sup>31</sup> Paton's vision of a new society in the South Pacific, sanctified by the blood of Christ, and characterized by a government ruling in His name may not have corresponded identically to Australian hopes for the group; however, in his advocacy of heading off French - and importantly for the Presbyterians, Catholic - designs on the region, Paton found an eager and sympathetic audience in Australia. Paton and other lobbyists played up the spectre of France casting long shadows on Australia's gleaming self-image in the future of the Pacific. That vision was expressed in 1871 by John Dunmore Lang, when he described a future Sydney as:

"...like the ancient city of Miletus in the flourishing period of Grecian colonization, another mother city of a whole series of flourishing colonies in New Guinea and in the numerous and beautiful islands of the Western Pacific."<sup>32</sup>

Gallic inroads in what might otherwise by Anglo-Saxon seas were not taken lightly by interests in Australia; they made their feelings known to a British Government which saw neither geo-political, nor economic advantage in annexing the New Hebrides. Britain nevertheless was willing to respond to Australian pressure. The identification of Presbyterian interests with the British Empire is an important factor to bear in mind in light of subsequent developments; it is an identification which associated Britain with a cultural mission in practice which has generally been regarded as the hallmark of French colonial doctrine: assimilation.

While Catholic missionaries had a history of complicity in French colonial activities - for example, Marist Fathers signed the treaty with local chiefs

in New Caledonia resulting in French annexation - by the time Franco-Anglo-Saxon rivalry came to the fore in the New Hebrides Catholic missionaries were no longer actively supported by the French Government.<sup>33</sup> Catholicism lagged far behind Presbyterianism in the archipelago: there was a shortage of priests and no indigenous priests were ordained until after World War II.<sup>34</sup> On Tanna, for many years Christianity and Presbyterianism were synonymous; the ascendancy of Presbyterianism, however, was a slow process.

Presbyterian missionaries continued to press their battle for indigenous hearts and minds on Tanna, although there were no converts until 1881. The influx of returning overseas laborers had a profound sociological impact on Tanna, polarizing indigenous sentiments both for and against Christianity. Exposure at Queensland missions and Christian schools had led some Tannese to be favorably disposed toward Christianity; others returned as opposed, or indifferent, to Christianity as when they left. Concerning recalcitrant returnees, MacMillan, stationed at Weasisi on Tanna's east coast, lamented in 1900 that:

"They have come back to teach their fellows worse evils than they knew in heathenism."<sup>35</sup>

Correspondence from the Rev. John Paton's son, Frank, now a missionary in his own right, discusses returnees from his post on Tanna's west coast:

"One of the big events of the last two months was the landing of twenty returned Kanakas from Queensland. Such a number has never been landed at one time within memory. Several of them were former members of our Candidates' Class, and I am glad to say they have been faithful. Four others were brought in while in Queensland, and they have joined the worship here. All the rest are now glorying in their return to naked heathenism."<sup>36</sup>

He goes on to say:

"We expect all our boys back soon now that the new Kanaka Bill has become law. Their return will be by no means an unmixed blessing, as our worst characters are returned Queenslanders."<sup>37</sup>

The bill Paton refers to was a legislative manifestation of the "White Australia" policy which resulted in an end to recruitment of laborers from the New Hebrides in 1904.<sup>38</sup> The "White Australia" policy resulted in the repatriation of approximately 6,000 islanders to the archipelago between 1902 and 1906.<sup>39</sup>

Presbyterian Missions began attracting converts who in turn became important in furthering Mission influence. One example of the individual Tannese who came to embrace Christianity was known as Tom Tanna, a name adopted during his Queensland sojourn as a laborer on a sugar plantation. Tom Tanna was recognized by the Presbyterian Missionaries as having "done all he could to influence his heathen brethren in favour of our Holy Religion."<sup>40</sup> When he died in 1899, Tom Tanna was eulogized by the Reverend Frank Paton as "one of the Fathers of our Church on West Tanna."<sup>41</sup>

Increased mission influence can also be traced to the efforts of individual Tannese who did not necessarily go abroad. One example is provided by Numanian, who was a teacher and assistant to the mission at West Tanna. The process of his conversion also illustrates some of the factors which influenced some Tannese to embrace Christianity. Numanian first came to Rev. Frank Paton for medicine. He later started working for the mission. Paton wrote in 1899 that:

"He was a good worker but a determined heathen, and was always demanding higher wages."<sup>42</sup>

Ultimately, Numanian relented when confronted with the mission's intractable position that attendance at the mission school was compulsory for those who could work at the mission.<sup>43</sup> When Numanian agreed to the missionarie's terms, they witnessed a change in him:

"From that day numanian took a deep interest in the Worship. He made rapid progress, and when we built our new Church he was one of our foremost helpers."<sup>44</sup>

It was noted that he showed an "outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace," when he began wearing clothes.<sup>45</sup> His spiritual progress and cultural transformation were described thus:

"First he worked for a shirt and lava lava for himself, and then he worked for clothes for his wife and children. At the same time he gave up kava and other heathen customs."<sup>46</sup>

By 1896 there were four missionaries stationed on Tanna: Paton at Black Beach on the west coast, Macmillan at Weasisi on the east coast, with Gray succeeding Neilson at Port Resolution, and Watt at Kwamera. In the words of the June 1896 Quarterly Jottings: "Thus a combined attack from four points will be made upon Tanna."<sup>47</sup> The progress of the mission was becoming apparent. In 1895 Watt reported attendance at church services to be 300; there were six communicants, and eight teachers serving the 60 people attending classes in seven schools.<sup>48</sup>

During a visit by John Paton to his son's station at Black Beach in 1899, he reported 220 attended the first service, over 200 at the second that same day.<sup>49</sup> That same year, Macmillan reported that 37 were attending catechuman's class at Weasisi.<sup>50</sup> The missions continued to grow that same year. Frank Paton noted that the largest congregation assembled, 270, attended services on 24 December 1899. With at baptism of 29 converts, church membership increased to 63.<sup>51</sup> MacMillan reported that on 31 December he baptised 16 converts, "exactly twice the number there were last time."<sup>52</sup>

Despite these significant gains, there was little time for the missionaries to develop a smug attitude. Frank Paton reported in early 1900 that:

"In the north-east three men were shot, and two of the bodies fell into the hands of the enemy. These bodies were passed from village to village, and one of them was cooked and eaten..."<sup>53</sup>

Paton went on to say:

"Heathen attended from far and near, and pieces of the body were sent right through our district as a great delicacy."<sup>54</sup>

Paton managed to intervene, preventing the second body from being eaten. This resulted in fears of retribution by the people of Ikunala, where the feast was interrupted. Paton believed that they planned an ambush for three Aniwan visiting from Weasisi. Advising them to take a less hazardous route upon their return, Paton believed he had saved them from being murdered, a possibility far from remote. Paton's comments in the aftermath provide insight into the situation then existing:

"All this shows how bitter the heathen are just now, and how careful we have to be in going amongst them. It is because they now realise fully how utterly opposed the Gospel is to all their devilry, and that they must fight it to the death or yield. It is a healthy sign, and shows more than anything the hold the Gospel is getting in the district."<sup>55</sup>

The combative imagery and orientation of the Presbyterian Mission became a practical reality as their numbers increased. The theocratic ideal embraced by the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland was realized in the early-twentieth century with the implementation of what became known as "Tanna Law." As there was no government agent on the island until 1912, the Presbyterian infrastructure became a powerful political force on Tanna. Converts became involved in the establishment and functioning of courts and a police force. Tanna Law became synonymous with repression; it attempted to subjugate non-believers and to spread Christian jurisdiction island-wide. Economic activities were controlled on land acquired by the mission, and practices deemed objectionable were prohibited. Kava drinking was attacked,

and those caught transporting it along roads and traditional exchange networks were heavily fined. Traditional dancing was attacked, and the custom of sexual initiation of young men by women was forbidden. Punishment was meted out in sentences of hard labor; excesses by converts, not likely to have been sanctioned by the missionaries themselves, included physical brutality and humiliation.<sup>56</sup> By the 1920s Presbyterian influence was at its zenith, with Christians outnumbering the unconverted by a 3:1 ratio.<sup>57</sup>

The plight of the non-Christians on Tanna was viewed sympathetically by the District Agent appointed to the island in 1912. The policies of Wilkes—an Englishman—which attempted to protect the rights of non-Christians, elicited efforts by the Presbyterians to have him removed; he was perceived as a threat to the progress of the mission. Wilkes, however, resigned to serve in the army in 1915. He was replaced by Nicol, another Britisher, who closely cooperated with the Christian theocracy on Tanna until he died in 1944.<sup>58</sup>

Non-Christians reacted optimistically to the appointment of a French District Agent to Tanna in 1925, many volunteering to help construct his house without compensation. However, the French District Agent and those who followed remained largely aloof from local politics until the conclusion of World War II: thus suggesting it was not what the French did during this era, but what they did not do which endeared them to the collective memory of kastom-oriented groups on Tanna.<sup>59</sup>

The consequences of Presbyterian domination on Tanna resulted in significant erosion of kastom. It was therefore surprising to missionaries and colonial authorities alike when Tannese in large numbers defected from Christian churches in 1940, embracing a return to kastom at the urging of a

prophet named John Frum. The movement had the millenarian trappings of a cargo cult, which included the promise of material wealth in great quantity and a new social order. Tannese built airstrips on the island in preparation for the arrival of the planes which would bear the cargo; traditional dancing was revived, as were other practices such as kava drinking. The movement is thought to have begun in the late-1930s, coming to the attention of the colonial authorities in late-1940. John Frum made his appearances in darkness, speaking in a falsetto voice. His message, which had wide appeal, was interpreted as a threat to the Christian and colonial leadership. Many of the leaders of the movement were jailed. While attempts at repression continued, the movement persisted, evolving into both a political party and organized church.<sup>60</sup>

Anthropologist Ron Brunton suggests that the John Frum movement was "a rather sophisticated, and generally successful, attempt by pagans to halt and reverse a process of progressive social disintegration."<sup>61</sup> Brunton cites the impact of Christian influence in undermining traditional marriage exchanges as the pivotal factor leading to the emergence of the movement. The organization of the Presbyterian Church put non-Christians at a distinct disadvantage on an island in which secular authority was rarely exerted on their behalf. The movement can thus be interpreted as a result of non-Christians adopting a strategy to advance their own interests. Some of the parallels related to the imagery and symbology of the the John Frum movement with Christianity can be seen as the application of "enemy" tactics for their own purposes.

A significant dimension of the John Frum movement is its relationship to the United States. As noted earlier, when kastom gavman was declared in opposition to the central government in 1980, an American Flag was raised. It



is important to note that some John Frum leaders jailed prior to the outbreak of World War II told of being visited in prison by John Frum, who came in spirit form and told the prisoners to watch for symbol. The arrival of the Americans in 1942 was seen as the fulfillment of that promise, as well as earlier prophecies relating to the coming of Americans. The arrival of the Americans resulted in the release of John Frum followers from prison in order to help in the construction of the numerous projects undertaken by the Americans.<sup>62</sup>

The American presence in the archipelago, based at Santo and Port Vila, was numerically as well as materially, impressive. The archipelago at that time was estimated to have 60,000 indigenous inhabitants; over 100,000 American servicemen were stationed in the islands, a significant number of whom were black. Over one half million American military personnel passed through the archipelago enroute other locations within the Pacific theater of operations.<sup>63</sup> One thousand Tannese are estimated to have been recruited to work for the Americans, and were impressed by the American wealth and generosity. They received high wages and were accorded a degree of respect as individuals previously denied under colonial rule. While the American period in the islands accommodated the earlier "cargo" orientation of the movement, the continuing use of American symbols, such as flags, appears to be a manifestation of nostalgia as well as a reminder of the link John Frum followers had with America and Americans in the war years. Allies in the war effort, America is still thought of as an ally;<sup>64</sup> the use of American symbols can be seen as fitting within the framework of indigenous use of alliance, despite the fact that the alliance since the war exists in symbols and memories rather than in more tangible terms for the John Frum movement.

However, symbols and memories are genuine sources of power for people of all societies. The John Frum movement recognized and utilized this power in pursuing its goals.

Reflecting on the dynamics of rebellion on Tanna, one is struck by the irony of the flags of the United States and France flying side by side at the headquarters of the John Frum movement in light of John Paton's vision of Anglo-Saxon unity described in a letter written in 1900:

"I hope the day will soon come when the Stars and Stripes and the old Union Jack will be united and firmly bound together for all defensive purposes... If these great nations were all firmly united in the interests of humanity, and for God's glory and honour, they could dictate peace to all nations, prevent oppression and cruelty among many, and give peace and prosperity to the world."<sup>65</sup>

Anglo-Saxon unity to Paton was generally advocated in opposition to France, a nation which embraced, in theory, a more developed and articulate expression of the same ideology, albeit with French culture at the forefront of the humane, civilizing mission envisioned by Paton.

The John Frum alliance with the French in opposition to the central government is in itself somewhat ironic. As partners in the colonial administration, the French actively sought to suppress the John Frum movement in the 1940s and 1950s, seeing it as a threat to colonial rule. However, the interests of the French and the John Frum movement converged in opposition to Anglo-Saxon elements in the 1970s.<sup>66</sup> Prior to the elections of 1979 the French Resident Commissioner, Jean-Jacques Robert, made a series of visits to Tanna during which he made gifts of rice, cigarettes, kerosene and other items to John Frum followers. His largesse included the gift of a 16-foot boat with two outboard motors to the people of Sulphur Bay.<sup>67</sup> The Tannese reciprocated, giving large quantities of manioc, taro and other produce to Tuk Nowau who acted as a liaison.<sup>68</sup> The French Resident Commissioner had been attending the

annual John Frum celebrations at Sulphur Bay since the mid-1970s; he was present at the 1980 celebrations in which kastom gavman was proclaimed in opposition to the anglophone central government.<sup>69</sup>

The central government, dominated by ni-Vanuatu Presbyterians, headed by an Anglican Priest, were seen as a threat to followers of John Frum. Historically antagonistic toward English-speaking mission activities for reasons of their own, the French came to be seen as allies against a common enemy. Covering the 1980 celebrations at Sulphur Bay, the Voice of the New Hebrides reported:

"Troubles with the Vanuaku Party originate at the beginning of the century when missionaries destroyed custom. Those who went along with the missionaries are the now Vanuaku Party members, the chief [Aissea of Sulphur Bay] said.

The missionaries and the British always caused problems, Voice of the New Hebrides was told. The French respected custom and custom was what John Frum wanted to preserve, the men told Voice of the New Hebrides."<sup>70</sup>

As a result of the activities of the Presbyterian Church on Tanna, Britain came to be perceived as assimilationist. The French doctrine of association, not taken seriously by critics, was perceived as a practical reality by a group struggling to retain its grip on traditional culture: a grip which memories suggested could be very tenuous. Followers of John Frum looked for allies; they found one in the French.

France, with its deeply rooted tradition of cultural imperialism would seem an odd ally for a group preoccupied with the protection and preservation of its own culture. Both groups were concerned with cultural continuity, and the prospects for French culture and Tannese kastom looked grim with the rise of the Presbyterian-dominated, anglophone Vanua'aku Party in control of the central government. John Frum followers allied with the French in fear of the

consequences of an independent Vanuatu ruled by their long-standing rivals, the Presbyterian politico-religious grouping. For France, the threat posed by the Vanua'aku Party had much broader implications. The Vanua'aku Party was an outspoken political foe in a position to undermine French interests in its territories of New Caledonia, Wallis and Futuna, and French Polynesia. There were also significant strategic implications involved, for the ability to test nuclear weapons in French Polynesia has long been maintained to be crucial to French national interests, not to mention prestige. France was less concerned with preserving its cultural influence on Tanna—it had long been minimal—than it was to thwart the Vanua'aku Party as an enemy of French cultural and geo-political influences elsewhere; these included French interests on other islands in the archipelago, such as Santo and Efate, as well as their other Pacific territories. While French activities in the South Pacific continued to be guided by considerations of preserving and extending cultural imperialism had to be compromised. The theoretical framework was already in place, the doctrine of association had already been applied—intentionally or not—on Tanna.

The non-Christian Tannese found common cause with the French because they were enemies of their enemies. There is little to suggest that French culture held anymore appeal than its counterpart across the channel. The only visible concession the John Frum movement made was their use of the French Flag. This served John Frum purposes by suggesting affiliation with a powerful ally. Indigenous use of the French Flag was useful in suggesting a source of powerful support, while at the same time providing their ally with the illusion of influence and indigenous cultural identification. Both of the foreign flags raised by Tannese rebels—the Tricolor and Stars and

Stripes—were powerful symbols co-opted by indigenous people for use in a framework of indigenous rivalry.

Jean Guiart, the distinguished French anthropologist, has expressed the conceptual framework of indigenous Tannese society in which symbolism continues to play a role. This is illustrated by the use of "exchange roads" in maintaining the proper relationship between different groups. Guiart suggests that symbolic gestures may vary in manifestation:

"When someone wanted to avoid being absorbed by a neighbor who was a Protestant, he became a Catholic. After that he would accept a French school in his area and not an English one."<sup>71</sup>

The John Frum alliance with the French, and the emergence of the movement itself, represents an indigenous strategy in pursuit of indigenous goals. Metropolitan alignment in this context has tended to obscure the true nature of the conflict which surfaced with independence on Tanna: the longstanding battle between proponents of kastom and converts to Christianity. The nature of the conflict has changed overtime. The inroads of outside influences, secular as well as spiritual, have eroded kastom to the extent that its principal advocates, John Frum followers at Sulphur Bay, have been accused of deviating from kastom. Brunton suggests that one of the reasons the people of Sulphur Bay (Ipikil) have been so preoccupied with John Frum is because it was there that it was most difficult to revive kastom because so much knowledge of traditional ways had been lost.<sup>72</sup> Thus kastom continues to vary in interpretation, even among its most ardent advocates. It is perhaps appropriate, in that traditional customary societies on Tanna and elsewhere in Vanuatu, were characterized by cultural diversity.

The cultural diversity characterizing traditional Vanuatu, combined with the influence of a seventy-four year period of joint administration by rival European cultures, made the transition to independence a complicated and

turbulent affair. The troubles which surfaced were the result of groups grappling with their visions of the future and reconciling their interpretations of the past.

Sulphur Bay, the headquarters of the John Frum movement, is now quiet. The land remains lush. To one side of the village the sea murmurs; to the other, Yasur Volcano smokes; and regularly thunders with powerful abruptness. The people there cling to their symbols, to kastom—as they interpret it—and wait for a message from John Frum.

## NOTES

1. I am indebted to the people staffing the Pacific Collection of the University of Hawaii, Manoa for their assistance in obtaining research materials, Ms. Renee Heyum, Curator, in particular. A special word of thanks is owed to Dr. Bob Kiste, Dr. Brij Lal, and Dr. David Hanlon for their advice, assistance and encouragement.
2. John Beasant, The Santo Rebellion, An Imperial Reckoning. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press: 1984).
3. Jeremy MacClancy, To Kill a Bird With Two Stones, A Short History of Vanuatu (Vila: Vanuatu Cultural Centre Publications, 1981), p. 63.
4. Ron Adams, In The Land of Strangers, A Century of European Contact With Tanna, 1774-1874. (Canberra: Australian National University Press: 1984). Adams notes what Europeans calls tribes are clusters of hamlets sharing common territorial names; the relative importance tribal affiliation played in Tannese society is unknown.
5. J.C. Beaglehole, The Exploration of the Pacific. (Stanford: Stanford University Press: 1966), p. 94.
6. Adams, In the Land of Strangers, p. 1.
7. Ibid, p. 3.
8. Ibid, p. 51.
9. W.P. Morrell, Britain in the Pacific Islands, (London: Oxford University Press, 1960), p. 93.
10. James Paton, Rev. (ed.), John G. Paton, D.D., Missionary to the New Hebrides, An Autobiography, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1894), p. 65.
11. Ibid, p. 66.
12. Ibid, p. 115.
13. Adams, In the Land of Strangers, p. 110.
14. Monty Lindstrom, "Speech and Kava on Tanna," Michael Allen, ed., Vanuatu: Politics, Economics and Ritual in Island Melanesia, (Sydney: Academic Press, 1981), p. 390.
15. Ibid., p. 382.
16. The New Hebrides South Sea Islands Quarterly Jottings of "The John G. Paton Mission Fund" for the Evangelization of the remaining Cannibals on These Islands, April 1896, no. 12, letter from Mrs. Wilson of Kew, Melbourne, p. 11.

17. Adams, In the Land of Strangers, p. 131.
18. Ibid., p. 148.
19. Ibid., p. 148.
20. Roger Thompson, Australian Imperialism in the Pacific: The Expansionist Era, 1820-1920. (Melbourne: Globe Press, 1980).
21. Christopher Andrew and A.S. Kanya-Forstner, The Climax of French Imperial Expansion, 1914-1924. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1981), p. 37.
22. Raymond Betts, Tricolore: The French Overseas Empire. (London and New York: Gordon and Cremonesi, 1978), p. 39.
23. Herbert Luethy and David Rodnick, French Motivations in the Suez Crisis, LLOYD A. FREE, ed., (Princeton: The Institute for International Social Research, 1956), p. 23.
24. See Henri Brunschwig, French Colonialism, 1871-1914, Myths and Realities. (London: Pall Mall, 1966).
25. Herbert Luethy and David Rodnick, French Foreign Policy Since the Second World War. (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson) p. 186.
26. Raymond Betts, Assimilation and Association in French Colonial Theory, 1890-1914. (New York: AMS Press, 1960).
27. Stuart Michael Persell, The French Colonial Lobby, 1889-1938. (Stanford: Hoover Institution, 1983), p. 38.
28. Persell, The French Colonial Lobby, p. 39.
29. D.K. Fieldhouse, The Colonial Empires, A Comparative Survey from the 18th Century. (London: 1966)
30. D.K. Fieldhouse, Economics and Empire, 1830-1914, (Ithaca, Cornell University Press: 1973), p. 449. Fieldhouse illuminates the economic dimensions of French motives in the New Hebrides, as well as advancing the arguments suggesting metropolitan colonial expansion was to a degree in response to the sub-imperialist ambitions of their colonies.
31. See Roger Thompson, Australian Imperialism in the Pacific.
32. Humphrey McQueen, A New Britannia, (Ringwood: Pelican Books, 1970), p. 66.
33. C.W. Newbury, "Aspects of French Policy in the Pacific, 1853-1906," Pacific Historical Review, vol. XXVII, no. 1, (Feb, 1958), p. 47.



34. Lack of priests had been a problem of long-standing; MacClancy notes in Two Kill a Bird with Two Stones, that in 1914 there were only 28, and in 1933 only 18, most of which were over 50 years old; these numbers apply to priests resident in the entire archipelago, p. 103.
35. Letter from Rev. T. MacMillan, "Disturbed Times on Tanna," Quarterly Jottings, 28 February 1900, no. 37, p. 5.
36. "From our First Missionary," West Tanna, Lenakel News, no. 35, Quarterly Jottings, no. 37, July 1902, p. 5.
37. Ibid., p. 6.
38. John Beasant, The Santo Rebellion, p. 7. The legislation relating to the "White Australia" Policy began in 1901, although recruitment in the New Hebrides did not end until 1904. The act itself was the Pacific Islanders Labourers Act, which permitted a limited number of licences in 1902-3; however, departure from Australia was mandatory at the end of 1906.
39. Deryck Scarr, "Recruits and Recruiters, A Portrait of the Pacific Islands Labour Trade," Barrie MacDonald, ed., p. 283, Essays From the Journal of Pacific History, extracted from J.P.H., vol. 11.
40. Letter from Rev. James Lawrie to Rev. James Paton, printed in Quarterly Jottings, April 1897, no. 16, p. 2.
41. "Lenakel News," no. 23, 1 January 1900, Quarterly Jottings, April 1900, no. 28, p. 14.
42. "Lenakel News," no. 22, 31 October 1899, Quarterly Jottings, no. 28, April 1900, p. 8.
43. Ibid., p. 8.
44. Ibid., p. 8.
45. Ibid., p. 1.
46. Ibid., p. 8.
47. Quarterly Jottings, no. 13, June 1896, p. 2.
48. Ibid., p. 2.
49. Letter from John Paton from Aniwa, 3 March 1899, published in Quarterly Jottings, no. 25, July 1899, p. 4.
50. Quarterly Jottings, no. 26, October 1899, p. 27.
51. "Lenakel News," no. 23, 1 January 1900, Quarterly Jottings, no. 28, April 1900, p. 16.

52. "East Tanna Mission, Extracts from Rev. Thompson MacMillan's Letters," November 1899, Quarterly Jottings, no. 23, 1 January 1900, p. 24.
53. "Lenakel News," no. 24, 28 February 1900, Quarterly Jottings, no. 29, July 1900, p. 11.
54. Ibid., p. 11.
55. "Lenakel News," no. 25, 30 April 1900, Quarterly Jottings, no. 30, October 1900.
56. Ron Brunton, "The Origins of the John Frum Movement," Michael Allen, ed., Vanuatu: Politics, Economics and Ritual in Island Melanesia, (Sydney: Academic Press, 1981), p. 367. See also, Deryck Scarr, Fragments of Empire: A History of the Western Pacific High Commission, 1914-1924, (Stanford: University Press, 1981), p. 245; and Charles Foreman, The Island Churches of the South Pacific, Emergence in the Twentieth Century, (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1982), p. 46.
57. Brunton, "The Origins of the John Frum Movement," p. 370.
58. Ibid., p. 369.
59. Ibid., p. 370.
60. See Peter Worsley, The Trumpet Shall Sound, A Study of 'Cargo' Cults in Melanesia, (London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1968), p. 153; and Robert J. Gregory and Janet E. Gregory, "John Frum: An Indigenous Strategy of Reaction to Mission Rule and the Colonial Order," Pacific Studies, vol. 17, no. 2, 1984, in addition to Brunton, "The Origins of the John Frum Movement."
61. Brunton, "The Origins of the John Frum Movement," p. 357.
62. Gregory, "John Frum: An Indigenous Strategy," p. 82. See also, Edward Rice, John Frum He Come, (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1974).
63. Monty Lindstrom, "Cult and Culture: American Dreams in Vanuatu," Pacific Studies, vol. IV, no. 2, Spring 1981; See also Y. Geslin, "Les Americains aux Nouvelles-Hebrides," Journal de la Societe des Oceanistes, vol. 12, 1956, p. 257.
64. Ibid. Lindstrom and others note the continuing affection for American symbols, such as flags and dogtags issued to laborers. In conversations with Isaac Wan at Sulphur Bay in August 1985, and other John Frum adherents, I was told that Man-Tanna and America had a "relationship," one which to the followers of John Frum, continues.
65. Excerpts from a letter written by John Paton, published in Quarterly Jottings, no. 29, July 1900, p. 4.

66. Lindstrom, "Cult and Culture," p. 108.
67. Ibid., See also Malcolm Salmon, "New Hebrides: High Hope are Haunted by High dangers," Pacific Islands Monthly, January 1980, p. 15.
68. Salmon, "High Hopes," p. 15; Salmon references an account by long-time resident of the islands, Bob Paul.
69. Lindstrom, "Cult and Culture," p. 108.
70. "Peace and Custom," Voice of the New Hebrides, no. 13, 23 February 1980, p. 5.
71. "New Hebrides: 'A Gross Mistake for Europeans to Interfere,'" Pacific Islands Monthly, April 1980, p. 10; this article is based on a transcript from an interview of Jean Guiart by Jean Massias of Nabanga.
72. Brunton, "The Origins of the John Frum Movement," p. 373.

# SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adams, Ron. In the Land of Strangers, A Century of European Contact with Tanna, 1774-1874. Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1984.
- Ali, Ahmed and Crocombe, Ron. Politics in Melanesia. Suva: Fiji Times and Herald Ltd. of the University of the South Pacific, 1982.
- Andrew, Christopher and Kanya-Forstner, A.S. The Climax of French Imperial Expansion. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1981.
- Beaglehole, J.C. The Exploration of the Pacific. Stanford: University Press, 1966.
- Beasant, John. The Santo Rebellion, An Imperial Reckoning. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1984.
- Betts, Raymond. Assimilation and Association in French Colonial Theory: 1890-1914. New York: AMS Press, 1960.
- Betts, Raymond. Tricouleur: The French Overseas Empire. London: Gordon and Cremonesi Publishers, 1978.
- Bourgeau, Jan. La France du Pacifique. Paris: Editions Maritimes et Coloniales, 1955.
- Brookfield, H.C. Colonialism, Development, and Independence: The Case of the Melanesian Islands in the South Pacific. Cambridge: University Press, 1972.
- Brunet, Auguste. Le Regime International des Nouvelles-Hebrides, Le Condominium Anglo-Francais. Paris: A. Rousseau, 1908.
- Brunton, Ron. "The Origins of the John Frum Movement." Allen, Michael, ed., Vanuatu: Politics Economics and Ritual in Island Melanesia. Sydney: Academic Press, 1981.
- Brunschwig, Henri. French Colonialism, 1871-1914, Myths and Realities. London: Pall Mall, 1966.
- Dalhgren, E.W. Les Relations Commerciales et Maritimes Entre La France et les Cotes de L'Ocean Pacifique. Paris: H. Champion, 1913.
- Daville, Ernest. La Colonisation Francaise aux Nouvelle-Hebrides. Paris: Andre, 1895.
- Fieldhouse, D.K. The Colonial Empires. A Comparative Study From the 18th Century. London: 1966.
- Fieldhouse, D.K. Economics and Empire, 1839-1914. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1973.

Forman, Charles. The Island Churches of the South Pacific, Emergence in the Twentieth Century. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1982.

Guiart, Jean. "John Frum Movement in Tanna." Oceania, 22, (3), 165-75, 1949.

"Forerunners of Melanesian Nationalism," Oceania, 22, 81-90, 1951.

"Culture Contact and the John Frum Movement of Tanna, New Hebrides." Southwestern Journal of Anthropology, 12, (1), 105-16, 1956.

"New Hebrides: 'A Gross Mistake for Europeans to Interfere,'" Pacific Islands Monthly, April 1980, p. 10.

Un Siecle et Demi de Contacts Culturels a Tanna, Nouvelles-Hebrides. Paris: Musee de l'Homme, 1956.

Gregory, Robert J. and Gregory, Janet E. "John Frum: An Indigenous Strategy of Reaction to Mission Rule and the Colonial Order," Pacific Studies, vol. 17, no. 2, 1984.

Jacomb, Edward. France and England in the New Hebrides, The Anglo-French Condominium. Melbourne: George Robertson and Company, 1914.

Lawrie, James. Letter, Quarterly Jottings, no. 29, July 1900.

Luethy, Herbert and Rodnick, David. French Motivations in the Suez Crisis Lloyd A. Free, ed., Princeton: The Institute for International Social Research, 1956.

Lindstrom, Monty, "Cult and Culture: American Dreams in Vanuatu," Pacific Studies, vol. IV, no. 2, Spring 1981.

"Speech and Kava on Tanna," Michael Allen, ed., Vanuatu: Politics, Economics and Ritual in Island Melanesia, Sydney: Academic Press, 1981.

"Lenakel News," no. 22, 31 October 1899, Quarterly Jottings, no. 28, April 1900.

no. 23, 1 January 1900, Quarterly Jottings, no. 28, April 1900.

no. 24, 28 February 1900, Quarterly Jottings, no. 29, July 1900.

no. 25, 30 April 1900, Quarterly Jottings, no. 30, October 1900.

"From Our First Missionary," no. 35, Quarterly Jottings, no. 37, July 1902.

MacClancy, Jeremy, "From New Hebrides to Vanuatu, 1979-80," Journal of Pacific History, vol. XVI, no. 1, 1981.

Two Kill A Bird With Two Stones, A Short History of Vanuatu. Vila: Vanuatu Cultural Centre Publications, 1981.

MacMillan, Thompson, Rev. "Disturbed Times on Tanna," no. 37, Quarterly Jottings, 28 February, 1900.

"East Tanna Mission, Extracts from Rev. Thompson MacMillan's Letters," November 1899, Quarterly Jottings, no. 23, 1 January 1900.

McQueen, Humphrey. A New Britannia. Ringwood, Victoria: Pelican Books, 1970.

Morrell, W.P. Britain in the Pacific Islands. London: Oxford University Press, 1960.

Newbury, Colin C., "Aspects of French Policy in the Pacific, 1853-1906," Pacific Historical Review, February 1958.

Paton, James, Rev., ed. John G. Paton, D.D., Missionary to the New Hebrides, An Autobiography. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1894.

Paton, John, Rev. Letter, Quarterly Jottings, no. 25, July 1899.

Letter, Quarterly Jottings, no. 29, July 1900.

Persell, Stuart Michael. The French Colonial Lobby, 1889-1938. Stanford: Hoover Institution, 1983.

Rice, Edward. John Frum He Come. New York: Doubleday, 1974.

Salmon, Malcolm. "New Hebrides: High Hopes are Haunted by High Dangers," Pacific Islands Monthly, January 1980.

Scarr, Deryck, "Recruits and Recruiters, A Portrait of the Pacific Islands Labour Trade," Barrie MacDonald, ed., Essays From the Journal of Pacific History, from Journal of Pacific History vol. II.

Fragments of Empire: A History of the Western Pacific High Commission, 1914-1924. Stanford: University Press, 1981.

Thompson, Roger. Australian Imperialism in the Pacific: The Expansionist Era, 1820-1920. Melbourne: Globe Press, 1980.

Tint, Herbert. French Foreign Policy Since the Second World War. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1972.

Voice of the New Hebrides, "Peace and Custom," no. 13, 23 February 1980.

Worsley, Peter. The Trumpet Shall Sound, A Study of 'Cargo' Cults in Melanesia. London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1968.

WHEN BLACK IS TRANSPARENT: FRENCH COLONIALISM IN NEW CALEDONIA,1878-1914

Chantal Ferraro

"The cultural identity of everyone gains in the diversity of the French-speaking world. The (French) government policies have not rested until the cultural identity of every overseas territory was respected, for a greater richness of the French nation, in deep respect for the roots of everybody. ...We believe that all cultures can contribute to the enhancement of the French culture, and beyond to universal civilization."

G. Lemoine  
State Secretary in charge of  
Overseas Territories  
—Paris, November 5, 1985

"To deserve the name of 'human being' in this new world, we had to renounce ourselves to the deepest root. Today, the glory of the faith and the honor of "civilizations," would be to invite the Kanaks to the banquet of civilizations, not as acultured beggars, but as free men."

J.M. Tjibaou  
President of the Provisional  
Government of FLNKS (Kanak Socialist  
National Liberation Front)  
—Noumea, 1975

On June 18, 1878, in the upper valley of Quamenie, New Caledonia, Jean Chene, a one-time convict then established as a rancher, was murdered along with his Melanesian wife and their son. Their executioners were of her own kin group, the Dogny tribe. A local French gendarme, Schenk, arrested the leader of the Dogny tribe, and then proceeded to indiscriminately jail the leaders of every other Kanak<sup>2</sup> group in the valley. Some of these groups were traditionally opposed to the French administration, others supportive of it.<sup>3</sup> This event was to trigger the first large scale Kanak rebellion, known as the Kanak Revolt of 1878,<sup>4</sup> in New Caledonia's history.

It was the attack on the police station of La Foa and the massacre of its gendarmes by Kanak tribesmen, in an attempt to free their leaders, that started the revolt on the night of June 24. By dawn this explosion of rage had spread to the village of La Foa and neighboring colonial outposts. Some forty persons — French civilians and gendarmes as well as a few Melanesians and foreign laborers — were dead by the day's end. Colonial administrators, not realizing the extent and gravity of these uprisings, were slow to react and dispatch aid. When aid did come, it was minimal. The rebel Kanak's first attack was on a French military outpost at Boulouparis, a short distance from La Foa. Although this attempted takeover was unsuccessful, the French officer in charge of the military operation, Colonel Gally-Pasboc, was killed three days later in a Kanak ambush, causing the French government to realize, for the first time, the seriousness of the situation.

From then on New Caledonia was under a state of siege. Military operations were taken over by Captain Henri Riviere, and the entire New Caledonian population became mobilized in a year-long war. Kanak insurgents adopted guerilla strategies (raids on civilian villages and military and



missionary outposts, retreat and hiding out in the mountains, etc.) to undermine the French presence. The French sector, mostly residing in Noumea, engaged in a war of attrition against the rebel forces, organized offensive and punitive expeditions with support received from France as well as from renegade Kanak groups who had aligned with the French. Peace was not restored until June 1879, when the state of siege was lifted and scores of prisoners were sent to the Isle of Pines and to Belep.<sup>5</sup>

It had been the widespread belief among the colonizing population that peaceful and friendly relations existed between the Kanaks and the Europeans. The colonizers consequently felt betrayed by the Kanaks as a result of the rebellion. Riviere, in his memoirs, deplored that the white settlers had been stabbed in the back by Kanaks they knew personally.<sup>6</sup> The daughter of John Paddon, one of New Caledonia's early white settlers, recalled how, as a child, she miraculously escaped death at the onset of the rebellion. That the "natives had been able to organize a spontaneous uprising of tribes throughout the colony was something totally unexpected."<sup>7</sup> Similarly, Clovis Savoie, resident historian of New Caledonia, described how the "trust was so great in those primitive beings, those big children" that the insurrection came as a total surprise to the settlers.<sup>8</sup>

Surprisingly, this vision is still a dominant one today. In 1978, Louis Jose Barbancon, writing about this episode in New Caledonia's history, claimed that:

contacts between the two ethnic groups were numerous and amicable: they were not relations between oppressors and oppressed. If the atmosphere had been tense, there would have been suspicion on the part of the colonizers, the police; in fact, it is precisely because trust existed that the surprise was total.<sup>9</sup>

What was wrong, then, was precisely that nothing seemed to be wrong in New Caledonia in 1878. Or so the European population thought.

Some forty years after the 1878 Revolt, the Kanak people again took up arms against colonialism. As recruits were leaving the northern village of Kone, on their way to Noumea and then to France in 1917, Kanaks in Kone and Hienghene rebelled.<sup>10</sup> They held out for a couple of months raiding coastal towns from their mountain outposts, but this insurrection, as the one of 1878, was also quelled by the colonizing authorities. A manhunt started. Reward notices were posted: fifty francs for a dead Kanak, twenty-five for a live prisoner.<sup>11</sup> Again, it came as a surprise to the French colonizers that the Kanaks would revolt, since the island had been peaceful and quiet for the past forty years, and also because the northern area of Kone and Hienghene had not participated in the 1878 Revolt.<sup>12</sup>

This paper proposes to investigate the period between the 1878 Revolt and the 1917 insurrection. By 1884, the year of its last military governor, New Caledonia had become a full-fledged colony. Its European inhabitants demanded participatory political institutions. Very different people had very different notions on what the colony should be about. They suggested scores of ideas as well on how to best realize these goals. Some hoped to maintain the then-current stream and turn New Caledonia into a giant open penitentiary, hoping to prove that murderers and thieves could be transformed into gentle, caring human beings and productive farmers. Others thought a prosperous future lay in mining. Even early explorers had been struck by the richness of New Caledonian mineral resources. Still others wanted to transform the colony into an agricultural state. Each faction proposed a concrete agenda for economic, social and political measures, and each achieved supremacy at one time or another during this forty year period.

These decades are crucial in understanding the shape and problems of contemporary New Caledonia and its colonial society, since it was then that

European colonizers were confronted with the issue of indigenous assimilation. Recent events in the islands show that this question is still far from being resolved. The task of this paper is to study the developmental dynamics of New Caledonia in the late nineteenth century, and what has been said about it. It is primarily concerned with the impact of those various schemes of colonization on the indigenous population of the territory. What did these plans mean to Kanaks in terms of their access to land and the possibility to live a decent life? Was the indigenous population even considered by the French state and the colonizers? And if so, how? In other words, did the French learn anything from the 1878 Revolt? Did they advise an answer other than: "How dare a savage give an ultimatum to a government?"<sup>13</sup>

Historians and ethno-historians of New Caledonia have paid a great deal of attention to times of crisis. R. Dousset-Leenhardt, L. Latham and J. Guiart wrote major works on the 1878 revolt with special emphasis on its causes. Perhaps because of its smaller scale and more confusing nature, the 1917 insurrection is less studied. Nevertheless, Leenhardt provided an eyewitness account, and later J. Guiart briefly analyzed its causes and unfoldings. The 1878-1917 period is certainly mentioned in general histories of New Caledonia, such as that of Brou, but those accounts tend to remain factual. Of great importance in understanding a major problem of late-19th Century New Caledonia is A. Saussol's definitive book on the history of land tenure in the islands. More recently, M. Dornoy offered a good summary of the issue. It is hoped that the present paper will contribute to a better understanding of the in-between crisis period, not only in terms of concrete events but also of the colonizers' ideological development. Because this paper takes for granted that colonialism and racism are crucial factors of New Caledonia society, it claims some affiliations to Guiart's work.

The decades following the Kanak Revolt saw a proliferation of declarations, published writings, and commentaries by colonizers and church and state officials. Numerous newspapers were started as well. Some folded overnight, others had a longer life.<sup>14</sup> Often created by just one person or two, always heavily involved in local politics. Besides local news, advertisements, and international items when they were available, the *raison d'être* for a newspaper was to allow its founders and their followers an opportunity to inject political opinions into the arena of public debates and decision-making. They proposed policies, attacked political opponents and responded to other newspaper columnists. Both style and content were personally and politically loaded. To get at the European perception of the colonial order, this period of New Caledonian history will be investigated through the study of those primary sources, with a major concern being the indigenous population and how its existence was envisioned. Unfortunately, it is not possible to match the European views to the Kanak perceptions of the time. Colonial conditions did not allow much expression for the Kanak population. Before launching into the later part of the 19th Century it seems important to identify the major themes in European discourse and the main trend of concrete developments, since those often served as springboards for later events.

A close reading of contemporary accounts of the events preceding the 1878 Rebellion does, at least between the lines, presage the insurrection and reveal its causes. Although the island had been opened to earlier foreign influences by sandalwood traders and whalers, the arrival of white settlers progressively and dramatically altered the relations of indigenous people to their land. France took official possession of New Caledonia in 1853, and the

Declaration de Bouzet in January 1855 claimed that "all land belongs to the French government." An 1859 decree, subsequently modified, instituted native reservations "for the needs of the Kanaks."<sup>15</sup> The Decret de Delimitation, enacted in March 1876, represented the legal apotheosis of the process of encroachment on Kanak lands that had started decades earlier. From then on, the "needs" of indigenous populations were to be determined according to European priorities. Kanaks were allowed to remain on their land only as long as no settler petitioned for it. The Decret de Delimitation was applied in early 1878 in La Foa, cradle of the 1878 revolt.<sup>16</sup> Close to two thousand hectares of land were taken away from local tribes, and another large plot was transferred to the penitentiary at Fonwary, near La Foa.<sup>17</sup> In 1877 colonizers were temporarily given the right, in the aftermath of a severe drought, to let their cattle graze on the penitentiary grounds traditionally used by indigenous people to grow their crops. Kanaks, affected equally by the drought, were forced to watch their crops destroyed by herds belonging to Europeans.<sup>18</sup>

Addressing the issue of the nature of colonial social order, Gascher, a New Caledonian historian, echoed the general sentiment at the time that white people were not suited for work in a non-temperate climate. Moreover, he argued, since the indigenous population could not be used as part of the work force in an effective fashion, New Caledonia should turn elsewhere to recruit the labor necessary for the development of the colony.<sup>19</sup> The French settlers assumed from the beginning that no use could be made of the Kanak population. This is especially intriguing since the Kanak population was numerous and French colonial history reveals a pattern of heavy reliance on local labor in developing conquered land. In 1887, out of a total population of 62,500,

there were 42,500 Melanesians and 9,100 free Europeans. By 1901, however, the indigenous count had dropped by 29,100.<sup>20</sup> Local employment in New Caledonia was minimal and was confined to Noumea, the main urban center. Early in July 1878, after the news of the Kanak uprising had reached Noumea, the hundred and fifty workers servicing settlers in the city were immediately rounded up and exiled to the island of Nou.<sup>21</sup>

It is here argued that from the very beginning it was a deliberate official French policy, as well as the actual practice of local French settlers, to instill and maintain segregation in the New Caledonian society. Though it is beyond the goal of this paper to deal with post-World War I time lapse, it can be argued that the deep and crippling problem between the Kanak and white populations of New Caledonia today have deep roots in their common past history. The feeling of good relations that the French had on the eve of the 1878 insurrection was nothing more than a blind illusion. An entire population could not be mistreated, ousted from the land and confined to the least productive areas of the island without altering its traditional way of life and their relations with those responsible. Had the French looked closely into the history of the multiple rebellions that took place in the decades preceeding the 1878 revolt,<sup>22</sup> had they been able to analyze their contempt and self-righteousness, perhaps the insurrection would have appeared inevitable rather than surprising. In 1878 Riviere stated, "I had been in New Caledonia for two years, and there was so little said of the Kanaks that I could believe that they did not exist or had disappeared."<sup>23</sup>

To the Europeans in New Caledonia, Kanaks were, first of all, black savages. "They are black, we are white" was often offered as a primary explanation of the revolt of 1878.<sup>24</sup> But black was more than a biological

characteristic. Their skin color and their "savage" behavior set Kanaks in a category halfway between the human and animal species in the eyes of the white New Caledonians. "He (Kanak man) can jump like a tiger and crawl like a snake," recalled Riviere,<sup>25</sup> and accordingly he often would "stalk (his) prey", nineteenth century French scholar, De Salinis observed.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, "when they smell blood, the ferocious beast sleeping in them awakens."<sup>27</sup> At time, Kanaks were able to display signs of intelligence, but they rarely utilized that potential to acquire civilization. That they were by nature lazy, suspicious, ferocious liars and thieves was the quasi-unanimous opinion expressed by colonizers.<sup>28</sup> Their god was "the devil"<sup>29</sup> and they scared Europeans with a dance called pilou-pilou. At night "they intoxicate themselves with music and noise...from time to time groups leave the dance to satisfy their cannibal appetite."<sup>30</sup> Cannibalism was the most definite proof of savagery.

Colonizers in Noumea, from very early on, took legal steps to protect themselves from the Melanesian population. An 1875 decree declared that since free access to the town by non-white persons created dissension and an obstacle to its proper functioning, Noumea from then on would be off limits to "natives",<sup>31</sup> thus making the Kanaks foreigners on their own soil.

Bearers of European civilization had a clear idea of the nature of the "Kanak problem." As Riviere summarized:

antagonism always exists between conquerers and conquered. The latter must be absorbed by the former, or else disappear. But those black races do not absorb. They differ too much from the white race by their instincts which have never progressed, by their invincible repugnance to work, by their complete indifference to a civilization they do not appreciate because they have no need for it.<sup>32</sup>

Since Kanaks could not be "absorbed" then, logically they would have to disappear. French Commander Testard, in 1879, proposed a radical solution to the "Kanak question":

one must begin by destroying this population if one is to remain securely in the country. The only convenient way to come to an end, would be to organize hunting parties, like we do for wolves in France, with several groups of thirty men, to destroy plantations, villages and renew such operations several times a day at the beginning of the rainy season.<sup>33</sup>

In 1866, at the Sydney International Exhibit, the emblem set forth by New Caledonia displayed a Kanak man with broken arms, and a convict stepping on his chains: Surrender for those who had every right to own their island, freedom for those who had none. The motto announced: "Civiliser, Rehabilitier, Produire"<sup>34</sup> or Civilize, Rehabilitate, Produce.

Very few whites voiced their concerns or expressed compassion toward the Kanaks. Jules Patouillet, who had come to New Caledonia as a doctor in 1867, was one of these rare few. Violence, he wrote, was systematically used to compel the Kanak population to grow food for the nascent colonial state, even if it meant the neglect of their own crops. The unwritten code of civilization, according to him, could be summarized as: "You shall not steal, but I can take your land; you shall not kill, but I will kill you if you do not cede the land inherited from your ancestors."<sup>35</sup>

Overwhelmed as they were by the violence of colonization, the Kanaks did not, however, remain passive. They rebelled repeatedly and violently. What is truly astonishing, looking back at the pre-1878 decades, is not that the great revolt took place, but rather that it could have come as such a "surprise" to the colonizers. French ethno-historian, Dousset-Leenhardt, for example, reports nineteen acts of hostility involving violent indigenous uprisings against some form of European penetration (missionary, military,



civilian). In return, French authorities typically retaliated, destroying villages, killing chiefs, burning crops.<sup>36</sup> European settlers, by the mid-1850's, were living in fear and insecurity. Revenge was a point of honor.<sup>37</sup>

The most important episode of pre-1878 Kanak resistance was the massacre at Pouebo. It differed from the preceding rebellions because it was less spontaneous and more planned, and involved an alliance between tribal groups against a common enemy. Another reason for the significance of this uprising was that it triggered a long-lasting dispute between Marist priests and the French government, who accused the former of inciting Kanaks to revolt, and resisting the take over of their land by the colonizers. Among the victims of this slaughter of 1868 were local gendarmes and families of colonizers who had settled in the Pouebo area.<sup>38</sup> Retaliation was often brutal. Several insurgents died in jail (officially from "natural causes"), ten Kanaks were sentenced to death, and a dozen more to forced labor.<sup>39</sup>

Relations between the French government and the populations of Pouebo reveal the general attitude of the French in New Caledonia. Legally, any piece of land on the island could be granted by French authorities to any colonizer, assuming that this land was not to be used by indigenous groups,<sup>40</sup> that is to say uninhabited and uncultivated. In a letter to a French commanding officer, a Marist priest from Pouebo claimed that the disputed zone was certainly inhabited and under cultivation. Indeed, it was the location of seven villages, all living off agricultural cash crops. Before the land had been confiscated by the French government for the French settlers, Bailly, one of the latter had visited the Marist mission and had asserted that he was about to receive his parcel of land and therefore the natives were, in fact,

working for his benefit.<sup>41</sup> Bailly was killed during the insurrection. Ouerebat, a Kanak resident of Pouebo, objected to the seizure of his ancestral land. Using a Marist as an intermediary, he wrote to the Governor: "In no way do I want to give up my land. I refuse to be alienated from the heritage of my ancestors." The Governor's response arrived promptly: "How dare a savage give an ultimatum to a government?"<sup>42</sup>

It was indeed the challenge of the Melanesian, "savage", black-skinned population, to the French, "civilized", white-skinned people and government that came as a surprise to European colonizers in the aftermath of the 1878 Revolt. Despite an official report, the question of the roots of the insurrection were never seriously addressed. French General de Trentinian formed a committee of investigation. Gendarme representatives, especially Schenk, and members of the Comité de Delimitation were included. The report, issued on February 4, 1879, stressed the invasion of Kanak land by European settlers and cattle, the irresponsibility of the colonizers vis-à-vis Kanak crop destruction, the use of forced labor, and the absence of European awareness of the indigenous people. Though it did not question the fundamental principles of colonialism in New Caledonia, the report recommended that more attention be devoted to Kanak customs and habits in order to speed up the "civilizing" process. It also praised the work done by the gendarmes, and shifted the blame on to the penitentiary administration.<sup>43</sup> Unfortunately, the Rapport Trentinian was quickly forgotten. Again, European colonizers felt that the defeat of the rebels meant final victory: Kanak surrender and the acceptance of white supremacy. This was also what they felt after the Pouebo massacre in 1868, especially in light of the relative tranquility of the following decade.<sup>44</sup> The 1878 revolt, however, proved them wrong.

Turning to the post-1878 period and following French historian Brou, the 1878-1910 period will be divided into three phases: 1) 1880-1884, the reign of the penitentiary, 2) 1884-1894, the search for development, 3) 1896-World War I, the agricultural colony.<sup>45</sup>

Following the 1878 Revolt, peace was restored in June 1889. Until 1884 New Caledonia, primarily a penitentiary colony, remained under the rule of military governors. On September 3, 1863, New Caledonia was declared a zone de transportation. According to this law, enacted by the French government, convicts were to be sent from France to the island, and set to work on the development of the colonial infrastructure. The Actes Organiques de 1874, which originated in Paris, further reinforced the penitentiary system and its military command, and provided the Governor with unlimited powers. He was given complete authority in indigenous affairs and could arrest, jail, or deport any Kanak without judicial process.<sup>46</sup> Until 1882, the penitentiary administration was subject to the Governor's approval. Subsequently, it became a more independent institution, often referred to as "a state within a state."<sup>47</sup>

After inmates served their time in jail and contributed a given amount of labor, they could, under specific circumstances, be released and given the opportunity to settle on a piece of land. The French government even organized, under religious auspices, the shipment of female convicts from France, who could marry newly released convicts in exchange for their freedom.<sup>48</sup> By 1882, more than three thousand prisoners had been released and had pushed inland to set up farming settlements. This original social experiment, however, turned out to be more problematic than the French administration had expected. What had been conceptualized as a path to human

regeneration resulted instead in the creation of a frontier area heavily populated by Kanaks in the interior of the island. Violence was rampant. The newly freed resented their exile tremendously and resented their assignment as New Caledonian farmers even more. To Leon Moncelon, who spent over a decade in the penitentiary, voluntary colonizers were the "last of the last."<sup>49</sup> Liberated convicts, as a result of the conditions for the settlement, came into frequent contact with the indigenous people. According to Leenhardt, a French missionary and anthropologist, Kanak tribes were eager to welcome these French settlers and to assist them in their installation. It was, however, not unusual that the former convicts would attempt to manipulate Kanaks, induce them to drink alcohol, and take out their anger and frustration on them.<sup>50</sup>

In the mid to late 1870's, the penitentiary's primary clients were political prisoners who had been arrested in Paris during the days of the French Commune, charged with conspiracy against the French government. A law of March 23, 1872 institutionalized their deportation for political exile. It was abolished in 1880. Some four thousand convicted political activist reached New Caledonia after a four to five month sea voyage from France as part of this program of deportation. Among those four thousand, a couple of hundred came from North Africa, where they were leaders of a major rebellion against the French colonial system in Morocco.<sup>52</sup> These prisoners all shared the same ideology, and had violently refused French state domination. When the 1878 Kanak Revolt broke out, most of these prisoners turned against the Kanaks. For example, Ahmed-Ben-Mezrag, a Moroccan leader, volunteered his men to fight against the Kanak rebels in exchange for their pardon.<sup>53</sup> It was not until 1895, however, that they were sent back home.<sup>54</sup>

Very few recognized or acknowledged the political significance of the Kanka Revolt. Louise Michel, renown French anarchist, was one. She had been sentenced in 1871 and recalled how the political activists had felt and expressed as much contempt towards Melanesians as the colonial administrators had. At the onset of the rebellion, she pleaded for the Kanaks. She believed that they were "fighting for their independence, for their life and their freedom." She sided with them as she had "with the people of Paris, revolted, crushed and defeated."<sup>55</sup> Louise Michel remained in New Caledonia until the early 1880's, where she created a school for Kanak children. Upon her return to Paris, she started a defense committee on behalf of the Kanak people.

French legislators had hoped that the transportation system would contribute to the development of the economic potential of the colony. By 1880, however, only 7.2% of the penitentiary population was actively working on public projects.<sup>56</sup> By then, the mining sector was booming, and New Caledonia was exporting three-quarters of the world's nickel.<sup>57</sup> Recruited workers from New Hebrides provided labor for the mines. In 1884, a New Hebrides laborer was paid less than two francs for a day's work. No Kanak would work for under three francs per day.<sup>58</sup> Indigenous people were able to rely on their social networks and social organization in order to maintain a life outside of the European sphere.

By 1880, in an attempt to increase its monetary resources, the colonial government of New Caledonia engaged in the massive sale of huge parcels of land, which were often purchased as an investment by wealthy Europeans. Kanaks, once again, were the victims of such a policy. On August 16, 1884, over one thousand hectares of the best land on the island was allocated to the penitentiary.<sup>61</sup>

In summary, the period of 1879-1884 was characterized by greater encroachment on Kanaka domain. European settlement did not confine itself to Noumea, but increasingly expanded inland. Nickel and cobalt mining brought about the development of a transportation network, which contributed to the opening of the island to colonial influence, and especially to more settlement and the loss of land to indigenous people. Meanwhile, the intensive use of convicts as workers, as well as the efficient recruiting system of labor from the New Hebrides, allowed the colony to function and develop while excluding the Kanak population as an important source of labor. The confinement of indigenous populations on tribal reservations and the recognition of the tribe as the basic social unit of a native organization provided the colony with a legal framework that allowed colonial expansion without dealing with the question of indigenous rights and/or grievances. The European perception of the Kanaks as lazy, sullen, and unappreciative of a great civilization (French), fitted perfectly with the ideology of segregation.

The period between 1884 and 1894 saw the trend toward agricultural development grow stronger. The grant of over one hundred thousand hectares of land to the penitentiary in 1884 had outraged the colonial faction, which was striving for a colonisation libre, that is, the settlement of individual families from Europe as cultivators recreating a European, and especially French, way of life and social order. A decree passed in December of 1885 attempted to stimulate the immigration of French citizens through the allocation of three hectares of land per family unit. It was, however, an insufficient step, and though it did not launch the expected wave of immigrants, it did represent an important turning point in the fate of New Caledonia. If penitentiary and mining had been prominent in earlier decades,

it was now the movement for colonisation libre that was gaining ground. In 1894, with the nomination of Feillet for Governor, it achieved supremacy.

Politically, the climate was unstable. The colonizers began to question the strength of colonial ties to France. The issue was not one of independence, but one, rather, of concern for the amount of control exercised from Paris. Some argued that it was too strong and that it impeded the development of the colony. This was the position advanced by L'Independent de la Nouvelle Calédonie<sup>63</sup> and L'Avenir de la Nouvelle Calédonie.<sup>64</sup> E. Mourot, former communard, who came as a political prisoner to New Caledonia and later immersed himself in local politics, argued the opposite. In 1886, he launched Le Progres de la Nouvelle Calédonie, which, from July 1884 on, became known as Le Progres de Noumea. He claimed that:

the French colony...contributes to the expansion of the French territory, to its power, to the welfare of the entire nation. To colonize is to people the colonies, to enhance France, its resources and its population. ...As long as the colony expands its agricultural potential, it also assimilates its native element.<sup>65</sup>

Mourot believed that French authorities in Paris ought to send young soldiers to New Caledonia for a period of three to five years in order to promote colonisation libre. After an initial year of military training, they would be sent inland to start their own farms. The soldiers' enthusiasm could turn New Caledonia into a dynamic island.<sup>66</sup> To Mourot and his followers, the expansion of France overseas was not just "a national triumph"; it was also "the conquest of civilization over barbarism."<sup>67</sup> Mourot thought that forced labor should serve primarily the interests of the public sector. Providing free labor was one way to be assimilated. Moreover, he claimed, foreign labor was essential to the life of the island.

The recruitment of workers from the New Hebrides had been halted in May of 1882 following a petition, signed by a couple of Noumean residents and sent to the President of the French Republic, which denounced abuses and mistreatment of the recruits. In November of 1883, under strong pressure from an organized Noumean society, the trait was re-established between the New Hebrides and New Caledonia. Although Mourot demanded more control over the recruiters, he nevertheless firmly believed that the future of the colony would be dependent on the availability of contracted foreign labor. To be viable for the colony, he argued, the price of the "merchandise" had to be strictly regulated and controlled by the Governor; otherwise it would be sold for five or six francs per "piece" and even more for a female "piece."<sup>69</sup> If public opinion in Noumea was divided over the issue of indentured labor, it was not so over the "Kanak problem."

Kanaks were rarely mentioned in Mourot's columns. He deplored, however, the natives spending their time drinking alcohol and getting arrested for it instead of working on the roads of the Vallee des Colons or Colonizers' Valley. Le progres de la Nouvelle Caledonie passionately campaigned for the restriction of those "savages" and "cannibals" from areas populated by white European settlers. Government policies, it argued, should assure that "barefoot hoods" and "niggers" were not allowed to cross the "civilized" town of Noumea.<sup>70</sup>

The assimilation that Mourot and his followers had in mind obviously excluded the majority of the population in New Caledonia. Europeans constituted the core of the society. Even New Hebridans were to some extent allowed to gravitate around the French center and settle in Noumea, "attracted by (our) civilization, by an existence less monotonous and more fulfilling,"



wrote Mourot in Le Progres de Noumea in 1884.<sup>71</sup> After all "for France, to colonize it not to dominate or exploit; it is to assimilate and civilize."<sup>72</sup>

In the 1880's, assimilation was defined differently by other political factions. L'Avenir de la Nouvelle Caledonie, created by M. Reichenbach, a Noumean resident, was an equally strong advocate of colonisation libre and favored political decentralization. Assimilation was also a stated objective and a central concern of this publication. Contrary to Mourot's views, Reichenbach did include the Kanaks in his definition of assimilation. Reichenbach believed that: "The progressive assimilation of the natives ought to be realized by the institution of a civil status on them, the creation of mandatory schools, and the setting up of private property."<sup>73</sup> This represented, at least in theory, the first step toward turning Kanaks into French citizens. A closer look at Reichenbach's explanations, however, reveals that he was not proposing the achievement of peaceful political and economic equality between indigenous and French populations. On the one hand, L'Avenir de la Nouvelle Caledonie purported that Kanaks were "sweet" people, but would endure our domination only to the extent that "(they were) not ill-treated in their tradition and customs." But on the other hand: "The Kanaks must know that we will always be the strongest,"<sup>74</sup> it was the mission of the whites to "uproot them from the state of savagery they still live in...", and to "teach them to grow our crops."<sup>75</sup> Only later would it be feasible to undermine the prestige of Kanak leaders, as well as institute private ownership of land. It is obvious, however, that all of the above measures were indeed insensitive to Kanak traditions and customs. Reichenbach's inconsistency did highlight the fact that there was, and still is, a contradiction in terms of assimilation and French colonialism. The

issue of Kanak integration quickly dropped out from L'Avenir de la Nouvelle Calédonie. By 1891, the only allusion to Kanak existence was linked to issues of delinquency.

In 1892, La Calédonie: Journal Republican proposed still another view of "native assimilation" in New Caledonia. It recognized that "the natives are perhaps still further from assimilation today than they were in 1867."<sup>76</sup> The reason for this was that, since the very beginning, the French government had always recognized and promoted tribal, that is communal, property over private ownership. As a result, argued La Calédonie, one could see indigenous people strolling all day long on communal grounds, instead of spending their energy working on a piece of land they would be responsible for as individuals."<sup>77</sup> By this ethnocentric reasoning, private property and civilization became two components in a package for freedom. In fact, Kanak freedom might very well have been linked to the fact that the Kanak way had equipped them with the capability of refusing to become the servants of European colonizers. As Brenier, ex-communard and former convict, who started in 1885 L'Indépendant de la Nouvelle Calédonie, explained to his readers: "the best role that Kanaks could play would be to become servants, maids and butlers for European colonizers."<sup>78</sup> Similarly, La Calédonie also regretted the lack of enthusiasm on the part of the native population to assume domestic roles.<sup>79</sup>

The issue of shifting from communal to private land ownership had become an important theme in New Caledonian politics in the 1880's. There were immediate, concrete advantages in doing so. Some argued that the granting of private ownership rights would be recognized as positive by the Kanak population. In exchange, the French administration could impose a head tax on every Kanak. Besides private property and head taxation, the solution to the

"Kanak problem" included the suppression of the hereditary chief system, as well as European education to boost the "native" moral. Perhaps all this would enable future generations to choose their leaders, and be "useful to the Republic."<sup>80</sup>

In the period between 1884 and 1894, the mining sector, so strong in earlier days, encountered difficulties. After the boom of 1881-82 and the subsequent recession of 1883, nickel mining in New Caledonia regained some ground until 1891, when Canadian nickel invaded the world market. Thio, on the southeastern coast of the island, had traditionally been the center of the mining industry, as well as the headquarters of La Societe Le Nickel (or SLN). In 1884, SLN had recruited six hundred Chinese workers for its mines.<sup>81</sup> The question of Chinese immigration started a heated debate among Europeans. In an article entitled, "That's it, we've got the Chinese," Mourot lamented that the import of Chinese workers was equivalent to a death sentence for the European population. "The sacrifice of France will not serve its children;" he argued, "it will benefit the Chinese."<sup>82</sup> But while Chinese immigration was upsetting to the European colonizers, what was even more unpalatable to the French population was that SLN had been created and was owned by M. Higginson, "an English Jew, who was the first to reveal the mining potential of New Caledonia to European markets."<sup>83</sup> Consequently, La Bataille: Journal des Interets Coloniaux was started in 1893 because "some foreigners in the country have declared war on the population."<sup>84</sup>

Higginson and his society had indeed benefited from very favorable access to labor, first by employing scores of New Hebrides workers, then by turning to a Chinese labor force. By the late 1880's, however, the recruitment of New Hebridean laborers again became a source of concern. Abuses by recruiters and

employers, which had led to the temporary suspension of la trait in 1882, did not stop after the re-establishment of work migration to New Caledonia in 1883. On the contrary, the situation was so alarming, that it became the object of a long exchange between the U.S. consul on the island and the Assistant Secretary of State in Washington, D.C. Numerous recruiters were conducting their business from ships flying the U.S. flag. From Noumea, the U.S. consul sought guidance from Washington, since he was convinced that "this native traffic will lead to diplomatic correspondence." He was personally aware of several cases of New Hebrides workers who came with a contract to work in stores or private homes and found themselves forcibly taken to nickel mines, in conditions "approaching slavery."<sup>85</sup> Of a group of 34 workers, 12 had died in the mines."<sup>86</sup> The importation of New Hebrides laborers stopped in 1889.

New Caledonia faced a major labor shortage in the mid-1880's. The SLN, however, seemed to stay immune from such concerns. Higginson had been the first to import Chinese laborers, and equally important, he had been able to gain access to the labor resources of the penitentiary. By 1878, three hundred convicts were active in the Diahot mines, and by 1888, close to two thousand on the plateau de Thio.<sup>87</sup> Small scale miners, who did not enjoy Higginson's privilege, had to pay a "free" worker five or six francs per work day. At the same time, the penitentiary provided the SLN with inmates who were paid twenty-two centimes a day.<sup>88</sup> These ideal conditions were not to last long. By 1894, the transportation was over, and no more convicts reached New Caledonia. Moreover, by then, two thousand two-hundred eighty six parcels of land had been allocated to released penitentiary inmates. Immigration from the New Hebrides was suspended, but already by the 1880's migrant workers

reportedly preferred Australia over New Caledonia. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that, in such a context, the French population of New Caledonia organized against Higginson's big business. By 1894, the issue of labor access, especially cheap labor, was a major source of concern. The viability and survival of the colony and the colonial order were at stake. The French community resented the fact that Higginson and his banker-partner, Rothschild, had dominated the economic life of the island for so long, and had induced the bankruptcy of small mining interests while delaying the pace of colonisation libre. That the two English-speakers intended to infiltrate the political institutions of the island as well, was certain.<sup>90</sup> By 1897, scores of small mines were forced to close down. Agricultural New Caledonia was gaining ground.

By 1893, it was widely believed that coffee growing ought to be promoted by official authorities on the island. After the failure of cotton and sugar, of cattle raising, and more recently of mining, coffee was thought of as the next savior. It was the task of Governor Feillet, one of the most controversial figures in the history of New Caledonia, who arrived on the island in 1894, to materialize that hope. He became a passionate advocate of colonization libre.

Colonization libre meant French settlement. The decision to exclude the indigenous population from that process was simply based, according to La Bataille, on scientific findings regarding the black race. "A fugitive in the bush is less dangerous than a black clerk. ...You deal with the former with a bullet; but if you try to do it with the latter, you will find imbeciles ready to pass judgement on you."<sup>91</sup> Accordingly, it would be a great mistake to allow these "niggers" in any administrative position, or to grant them

rights. This was the obvious political conclusion to draw from the biological findings of Dr. Gerard, of the medical school of Paris, who contended that "intelligent races" were characterized by a cranial angle more open than that of black races. But since it had taken centuries for the former to acquire such cranial shape, only colonialism could lead the latter in the same direction. It would be unfair to impede "the progression of receding foreheads."<sup>92</sup> Consequently, the notion of political equality was scientifically absurd. If New Caledonia was to become a dynamic colony, it would have to import European population, that is, the pinnacle of the human race.

Turning New Caledonia into a giant agricultural venture was, for Governor Feillet, not only a goal, but a mission. As a political personage, he was either loved or hated, and his extreme rigidity had polarized the New Caledonian society by the end of his mandate. He declared war on the proponents of mining, advocates of a penitentiary colony, and the clergy and considered the defenders of colonisation libre to be the only good citizens.<sup>93</sup> He quickly became renowned for his merciless repression of political opposition.

Feillet's grand scheme did, however, please many Europeans. His primary objective was to attract French families to New Caledonia, and to provide them with the opportunity to develop coffee plantations. In his eyes, access to land was not a problem. The Manuel du Colon en Nouvelle Calédonie, or colonizer's handbook, which was distributed in France to promote colonization, suggested that coffee would greatly prosper in taro patches left behind by Kanaks after the confiscation of their land.<sup>94</sup> Potential immigrants were carefully screened: they had to be French citizens from agricultural

backgrounds, and possess little capital. Upon arrival, potential colonizers were allocated an initial grant of twenty five hectares.<sup>95</sup>

In 1894, Governor Feillet halted "le robinet d'eau sale," or the flow of dirty water, that is, the coming of convicts from France. A couple of months after he assumed office, Feillet created L'Union Agricole Caledonienne, or Caledonian Agricultural Union, whose task was to promote immigration and institutionalize settlement. As a result, 525 new French families were introduced to New Caledonia.<sup>97</sup> In addition, the island developed the infrastructure to facilitate coffee export.

Not surprisingly, Feillet's bold policies collided with the interests of the Kanak population. The content of his handbook clearly indicated that, in his eyes, Kanak land was no-man's land. The Governor's dearest project in 1895 was the creation of an experimental agricultural center at Voh. It was an area heavily populated by indigenous groups. But this did not prevent Feillet from confiscating one hundred fifty hectares of the best land. In a memo, he claimed:

the tribe has been confined on another part of the national territory, after it was given what we considered was a decent payment, in the name of the spirit of this administration and of equity ... my intention is, thanks to this new acquisition of good productive land so far unused, to promote the development of the center.<sup>98</sup>

Feillet's policies of expansion turned into a heavy burden on the colony's finances. In 1895, he enacted a law requiring that a head tax of ten francs be paid by every Kanak. Europeans as well as foreigners were exempted from this tax. The average worker's daily pay at this time was just one franc.<sup>99</sup> Because of their sporadic employment, this head tax placed an enormous burden on the Kanaks. The combination of massive land alienation and heavy taxation

took place at a time when the colony was moving toward a single-crop economy. Coffee cultivation requires intensive labor during the harvest season, and almost no work in between. The imposition of a head tax and the confiscation of productive land drastically threatened the independence of the Kanaks. It also made it necessary to look out, in the sphere of the colonizers, for alternative means of survival. Accordingly, many expected the problems of labor in New Caledonia to be solved if the indigenous population would fulfill the role of a reserve of labor force.

Interestingly, Kanak head taxation was not approved of by the French government in Paris. It was, however, maintained by Governor Feillet until 1899. In France, the Comite de Defense des Indignes, formed by Louise Michel upon her return to France, lobbied for its repeal. In New Caledonia, the strongest criticism came from the Marists, who were violently attacked by Feillet and his followers for having provided documentation and testimony to the Comite. Meanwhile, the Governor declared that head taxation was no problem for the Kanaks, because it was no burden to them. Simultaneously, however, Kanak groups began agitating on the east coast, especially at Wapag and Ti-ouaka.<sup>100</sup> As in the Pouebo massacre, Marists were held responsible for fomenting insurrection. Feillet demanded their expulsion from New Caledonia,<sup>101</sup> and was responsible for introducing Protestant ministers on a large scale.<sup>102</sup> Head taxation on the Kanaks was declared illegal by the Paris government in 1899.

The mistreatment of the Kanak population was blatant. By the late 1880s, most newspapers and political groups did not question the basic orientation and tenets of Governor Feillet's policies. Open dissent, rarely expressed, was heavily repressed. Newspapers daily reported notices of Kanak arrests for



"drunkenness," "theft," "exhibitionism," "armed robbery," "assault on Europeans," and simply crossing the town of Noumea.<sup>103</sup> In 1899, the Parisian newspaper, L'Eclair, denounced the effects of Feillet's policy on Kanak life. It charged that Feillet had deported the chiefs of Hienghene to Tahiti, had officially announced that, since the colony needed ten million francs, he would propose to raise this through the means of a "light" collection from Kanaks, and that he planned to build roads at a "very advantageous" cost by using indigenous labor. In fact, an 1898 decree legally placed the Kanak population in the category of foreign residents. They could be sentenced and even jailed without trial.<sup>104</sup>

Not surprisingly, the Governor and his Republican Committee responded with outrage at what they felt were unfounded accusations. La Caledonie: Journal Republicain denied that Kanaks were forbidden to reside in the town of Noumea, despite the fact that its columns had repeatedly reported Kanak arrests — arrests on the basis of Kanaks being present within city limits. Furthermore, the paper accused Paris of not being realistic enough to see that the Kanak presence in itself represented a serious threat to the life and very existence of the white European population in New Caledonia. Moreover, it argued that Kanaks "understood so well the advantages they receive from colonization that they are the first ones to demand land limitation for their tribes." Indeed, it was only because Feillet lacked land surveyors that he could not possibly keep up with such a demand.<sup>105</sup> La Caledonie held Louise Michel responsible for the article published in L'Eclair on the ground that she had always sided with "those Melanesian cats."<sup>106</sup>

It was no easy task to voice opposition to powerful Governor Feillet. But some did, and paid dearly for it. Marc de Goupils was one of them. As a

teacher in a prestigious Parisian lycee, he had been attracted by Feillet's publicity, and had arrived with his two brothers in New Caledonia in 1898. Upon their arrival, the immigration office allocated to them a coffee plantation in the northern part of the island. Their staff included twelve New Hebrideans, ten Annamites, who had been deported from France for political reasons, and a few Kanaks.<sup>107</sup> Governor Feillet had allowed rebel groups and families of the 1878 insurrection to come back from exile at l'ile de Nou in exchange for providing five years of labor to French plantation owners. Some had been assigned to the Goupils. They formed a small village and regrouped around the eldest member, Samuel, dreaming of the day when they would be free again and reunited with their missing tribesmen, who were scattered all over New Caledonia, thanks to colonial rules.<sup>108</sup> By 1898, even the most remote area of the colony was under French rule. The French colonial state was omnipresent. "To be loved by the gendarmes was to be loved by God," Le Goupils remembered.<sup>109</sup> His vision of colonialism, from the very beginning, conflicted with Feillet's notion of colonial order. The Goupil brothers gave back to the Kanaks the right to perform rituals and carry on pilou-pilou, the native dance which their predecessors on the plantations had forbidden. The brothers also acted as a buffer between colonial authorities - especially the gendarmes - and their Kanak workers. But most important were the personal attacks which Marc launched against Feillet's despotism and his management of the colony. The three brothers were especially concerned with the significance and impact of French rule on native populations. Marc, after a troubled political career as councilman, was expelled from New Caledonia<sup>110</sup> by the colonial administration.

None of the Goupil brothers had professed a revolutionary view of the

social order. They accepted the rules of colonialism, settled down on a plantation, and used Kanak, as well as indentured labor, intensively. But they were sensitive to issues of injustice, fairness, and blatant inequality. To them, the treatment Kanaks received from planters, gendarmes, and colonial offices was not fair. In the same way, in 1868 at Pouebo, Marist brothers did not think that it was fair to take away from small agricultural villages enormous amounts of land. They, too, believed in imposing their own ideology on indigenous population. Yet they sided with the underdogs, as the Goupil brothers had. They were all expelled from the colony of New Caledonia. There was no room for dissent in the French colonial order of New Caledonia.

In order to recognize that there was a problem before the 1878 revolt or the 1917 uprisings, French colonizers would have had to acknowledge that the people who first inhabited the islands were true human beings capable of thoughtful action, of having a project. But the French never thought of the Kanaks as equal. Although this is not surprising in a colonial situation, it becomes overly dramatic in settlement colonies, like New Caledonia, where there is a pretense of bi-racial society.

Ready access to convict and foreign labor allowed the colonizers to confine the Kanaks, through laws and force, out of the sight of Europeans. When the shortage of labor became acute, the colonial administration devised ways to force the indigenous population to become workers. In late 19th Century New Caledonia, the role assigned to the Kanaks in the colonial framework was precisely to have them adapt to colonizers' needs and the necessity of the colony. The ideology promoted by Europeans was not a cause of colonialism, as is often suggested, but rather its justification. Although again, this is not surprising in a colonial context, it has has unfortunately a very dramatic impact on the 20th Century Kanak fight for dignity.

# NOTES

1. This paper is based on material available in the Pacific Collection of the University of Hawaii at Manoa, Honolulu. I am especially indebted to Ms. Renee Heyum, Curator of the Pacific Collection, for her priceless assistance, and to Professor Brij Lal for his constant encouragement.

Whenever possible I have used the names of French personnel involved, which I regret to say was not possible in the indigenous population involved, due to the non-availability of the latter in the material consulted.

2. The term "Kanak" refers to the indigenous population of New Caledonia.
3. The issue of alliance between French and Kanak groups against Kanak rebels is of considerable importance in the unfolding of the 1870 Rebellion. See Lathan, L.: "Revolt Re-Examined: the 1878 Insurrection in New Caledonia," in The Journal of Pacific History (JPH), X(1975):48-63, for a historical analysis of the pre-1878 patterns of such alliances in New Caledonia, see Bronwen, D.: "Conflict and Alliance in a Colonial Context," JPH, XXV(1980):21-51; Dousset, Leenhardt, R., Colonialisme et Contradictions. Nouvelle Caledonia 1878-1978: Les Causes de l'Insurrection de 1878 (Editions l'Harmattan, Paris, 1978).
4. Lathan, L., La Revolte de 1878: Etude Critique des Causes de La Rebellion de 1878 en Nouvelle Caledonie. Noumea: Publications de la Societe Historique de la Nouvelle Caledonie, #17, 1978, pp. 26-29.
5. Brou, B., 1973, Histoire de la Nouvelle Caledonia: Les Temps Modernes: 1774-1925. Noumea, Publications de la Societe Historique de la Nouvelle Caledonie, #4, pp. 162-64.
6. Riviere, Henri L., 1880, Souvenirs de la Nouvelle Caledonie. Paris, Calmann Levy, p. 117.
7. Burchett, Wilfred G., 1942, Pacific Treasure Island: New Caledonia. Melbourne, F.W. Cheshire PTY. LTD, p. 126.
8. Savoie, C., 1922, Dans l'Ocean Pacifique: Histoire de la Nouvelle Caledonie et de ses dependances. Noumea, Imprimerie Nationale, p. 153.
9. Barbanson, L.S., in Latham, L., La Revolte.
10. Schmidt, M.P., 1944, New Caledonia: Know Her to Love Her. Sydney, G.A. Jones, pp. 12-21. For a description of the 1917 events, see Guiart, J., Journal de la Societe des Oceanistes, XXVI(1970) (29):265-280.
11. Leenhardt, M., 1953, De la Vie a la Mort: L'Evangile en Nouvelle Caledonie. Paris, Societe des Missions Evangeliques, p. 9.

12. Dousset-Leenhardt, R., 1976, Terre Natale, Terre d'Exil. Paris, Maisonneuve et Larose, pp. 80-82.
13. Written answer of French Governor to a Kanak farmer in Marist Fathers: Papers on Pouebo Massacre, 1867-68.
14. For a partial listing of such newspapers, see Brou, Histoire de la Nouvelle Calédonie, p. 227.
15. Brou, p. 158-59.
16. Ibid, pp. 158-161.
17. Latham, p. 40.
18. Brou, p. 161.
19. Gascher, P., 1975, La Belle au Bois Dormant: Regards sur l'Administration Coloniale en Nouvelle Calédonie de 1874. Noumea, Publications de la Société Historique de la Nouvelle Calédonie, #8, pp. 215-219.
20. Dornoy, M., 1984, Politics in New Caledonia. Sydney, Sydney U. Press, p. 39.
21. Brou, p. 161.
22. Dousset-Leenhardt R., Colonialisme et Contradictions: Nouvelle Calédonie 1878-1978: Les Causes de l'Insurrection de 1878. Paris, L'Marmatlaw, 1978.
23. Riviere, p. 81.
24. La Nouvelle Calédonie, 23 October, 1879.
25. Riviere, p. 19.
26. De Salinis, A., 1927, Marins et Missionnaires: Conquête de la Nouvelle Calédonie, 1843-53. Paris, Pierre Tequi., p. 17.
27. Riviere, p. 139.
28. Savoie, p. 8; Riviere, p. 17; De Salinis.
29. Riviere, p. 17.'
30. Laine, M., 1942, Pioneer Days in New Caledonia. Noumea, Imprimeries Reuines, p. 28.
31. Laubreaux, J., 1965, Les Asiatiques en Nouvelle Calédonie. Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Numaines, U. de Montpellier., p. 28.

32. Riviere, pp. 283-84.
33. Quoted in Guiart, J., 1983, La Terre est le Sang des Morts. Paris, Anthropos., p. 58.
34. Patouillet, J., 1873, Trois Ans en Nouvelle Caledonie. Paris, E. Dentu., pp. 43-42.
35. Ibid., pp. 46-47.
36. Dousset-Leenhardt, R., pp. 115-123.
37. Schmidt, M.P., pp. 32-34.
38. Patouillet, pp. 52-56.
39. Le Moniteur de la Nouvelle Caledonie, 17 May, 1868.
40. Brou, p. 159.
41. Marist Fathers: Papers on Pouebo Massacre 1867-68.
42. Ibid.
43. Brou, pp. 166-68.
44. Dousset-Leenhardt, R., p. 124.
45. Brou, Histoire.
46. Gascher, pp. 27-36.
47. Brou, p. 196.
48. Ibid., pp. 195-96.
49. Moncelon, L., 1886, Le Bagne et la Colonisation Penale a la Nouvelle Caledonie par un Temoin Oculaire. Paris, Charles Bayle, p. 100.
50. Leenhardt, pp. 7-8.
51. Bitter, M., 1975, La Presse des Deportes de la Commune en Nouvelle Caledonie. Paris, Compasgnie Generale Maritime, p. 35.
52. Brou, pp. 150-152.
53. Griffith, G., 1901, In an Unknown Prison Land. London, Hutchinson & Co., p. 199.
54. La Caledonie: Journal Republicain, 15 March, 1895.

55. Thomas, E., "Loise Michel en Nouvelle Calédonie," in Nouvelle Revue Française, #213, 1970, Paris.
56. Villechalane, B., "La Calédonie c'est ça! Thio," in La France Australe, October–November, 1977, Nouméa.
57. Ibid.
58. Gascher, p. 220.
59. Gallet, M., 1884, Notice sur la Nouvelle Calédonie. Nouméa, Imprimerie du Gouvernement, p. 50.
60. Villechalane.
61. Gascher, pp. 89–91.
62. Ibid, p. 92.
63. L'Indépendant de la Nouvelle Calédonie, 19 March, 1885.
64. L'Avenir de la Nouvelle Calédonie, 17 December, 1886.
65. Le Progrès de la Nouvelle Calédonie, 24 April, 1884.
66. Ibid., 26 April, 1884.
67. Ibid., 5 July, 1884.
68. Gascher, pp. 226–27.
69. Le Progrès de la Nouvelle Calédonie, 22 January, 1884.
70. Ibid., 26 January 1884.
72. Le Progrès de Nouméa, 22 November, 1884.
73. L'Avenir de la Nouvelle Calédonie, 17 December, 1886.
74. Ibid., 11 January 1887.
75. Ibid., 19 December, 1886.
76. La Calédonie: Journal Republicain, 10 March, 1892.
77. Ibid.
78. L'Indépendant de la Nouvelle Calédonie, 9 April, 1885.
79. La Calédonie, 23 February, 1892.

80. Ibid., 10 March, 1892.
81. Villechalane.
82. Le Progres de Noumea, 31 December, 1884.
83. La Bataille: Journal des Interests Coloniaux, 21 June, 1893.
84. Ibid., 17 June, 1893.
85. Despatches from USA Consuls in Noumea, 3 January, 1889.
86. Ibid., 15 October 1888.
87. Gascher, op. cit. p. 77.
88. Ibid., p. 87.
89. Ibid., p. 173-229.
90. La Bataille: Journal des Interets Coloniaux, 21 June, 1893.
91. Ibid., 11 August, 1893.
92. Ibid.
93. Brou, pp. 225-26.
94. Guiart, p. 65.
95. Brou, pp. 225-26.
96. Villechalane.
97. Brou, p. 226.
98. La Caledonie, Journal Republicain, 6 March, 1895.
99. Brou, p. 234.
100. Guiart, p. 98.
101. Laurent, C., Les Missionnaires de la Nouvelle Caledonia. Paris, Firmin, Didot et Cie., pp. 16-23.
102. Centenaire des Missions Marists en Oceanie 1836-1936. Lyon, E. Vitte, p. 52.
103. La Caledonie: Journal Republicain, 1895-96-97-98-99.
104. L'Eclair, 1899.



105. La Caledonie: Journal Republicain, 15 February, 1899.
106. Ibid., 16 February, 1899.
107. Le Goupils, M., 1928, Dans la Brousse Caledonienne: Souvenirs d'un Ancien Planteur 1898-1904. Paris, Librairie Academique, pp. 22-23.
108. Le Goupils, M., 1910, Comment on Cesse d'Etre Colon: Six Annees in Nouvelle Caledonie. Paris, Grasset, p. 135.
109. Ibid., p. 198.
110. Le Goupils, M., Dans la Brousse.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- A. Bernard, L'Archipel de la Nouvelle Calédonie, (Paris 1895).
- M. Bitter, La Presse de Déportés de la Commune en Nouvelle Calédonie, (Paris, 1975).
- D. Bronwen, "Conflict and Alliance in a Colonial Context," Journal of Pacific History, 15 (1980):21-51.
- B. Brou, Histoire de la Nouvelle Calédonie: Les Temps Modernes: 1774-1925, (Nouméa 1973).
- W.G. Burchett, Pacific Treasure Island: New Caledonia (Melbourne 1942).
- Centenaire des Missions Maristes in Oceanie 1836-1936, (Paris 1936).
- A. De Salinis, Marins et Missionnaires: Conquête de la Nouvelle Calédonie 1843-53 (Paris 1892).
- Despatches from USA Consul in Nouméa 1887-1905, (microfilm), National Archives.
- J. D'Orliac, Les Iles au Parfum de Santal, (Paris 1929).
- M. Dornoy, Politics in New Caledonia, (Sydney 1984).
- R. Dousset-Leenhardt, Colonialism et Contradictions: Nouvelle Calédonie 1878-1978: Les Causes de l'Insurrection de 1878, (Paris 1978).
- R. Dousset-Leenhardt, Terra Natale, Terre d'Exil, (Paris 1976).
- M. Gallet, Notice Sur la Nouvelle Calédonie, (Nouméa 1884).
- J. Garnier, La Nouvelle Calédonie, (Paris 1873).
- D. Gascher, La Belle au Bois Dormant: Regards sur l'Administration Coloniale in Nouvelle Calédonie de 1874 à 1894, (Nouméa 1975).
- G. Griffith, In an Unknown Prison Land, (London 1901).
- J. Guiart, "Les Evenements de 1917 en Nouvelle Calédonie", Journal de la Société des Oceanistes, 26(1970),265-280.
- J. Guiart, La Terre est le Sang des Morts, (Paris 1983).
- L. Latham, La Révolte de 1878: Etude Critique des Causes de la Rébellion de 1878 in Nouvelle Calédonie, (Nouméa 1978).
- L. Latham, "Revolt re-examined: The 1878 Insurrection in New Caledonia", Journal of Pacific History, 10(1975),48-63.

- H. Laine, Pioneer Days in New Caledonia, (Noumea 1942).
- J. Laubreaux, Les Asiatiques in Nouvelle Caledonie, (Montpellier 1965).
- C. Laurent, Les Missionnaires de la Nouvelle Caledonie, (Paris).
- C. Leenhardt, Gens de la Grande Terre, Paris 1937.
- M. Leenhardt, De la Mort a la Vie: l'Evangile en Nouvelle Caledonie, (Paris 1953).
- M. Le Goupils, Comment on Cesse d'Etre Colon: Six Annees in Nouvelle Caledonie, 1898-1904, (Paris 1928).
- M. Le Goupils, Dans la Brousse Caledonienne: Souvenir d'un Ancien Planteur 1898-1904, (Paris 1928).
- A. Mangin, Voyage a la Nouvelle Caledonie, (Paris 1883).
- J. Mariotti, Nouvelle Caledonie (Paris 1883).
- Marist Fathers, New Caledonia: Papers on the Puoebo Massacre, 1867-68, (microfilm) Pacific Manuscript Bureau.
- Marist Fathers, New Caledonia: Correspondence 1857-1920, (microfilm) Pacific Manuscript Bureau.
- L. Moncelon, Le Bagne et la Colonisation Penale a la Nouvelle Caledonie par un Temoin Oculaire, (Paris 1886).
- P. O'Reilly, Caledoniens, (Paris 1980).
- J. Patouillet, Trois Ans en Nouvelle Caledonie, (Paris 1873).
- H. Priday, Cannibal Island, (Wellington 1944).
- J. Risbec, Impressions de Nouvelle Caledonie, (Melun 1928).
- H.L. Riviere, Souvenires de la Nouvelle Caledonie, (Paris 1880).
- A. Saussol, L'Heritage Essai sur le Probleme Foncier Melanesien en Nouvelle Caledonie, (Paris 1979).
- C. Savoie, Dans l'Ocean Pacifique: Histoire de la Nouvelle Caledonie et de ses Dependances, (Noumea 1922).
- H.P. Schmidt, New Caledonia: Know Her to Love Her, (Sydney 1944).
- A. Schreiner, La Nouvelle Caledonie, (Paris 1882).
- E. Thomas, "Louise Michel en Nouvelle Caledonie", Nouvelle Revue Francais (#213 1970).

- V. Thompson and R. Adloff, The French Pacific Islands: French Polynesia and New Caledonia, (Berkeley 1971).
- J. Van Mai, "Chan Dang": Les Tonkinois de Caledonie au Temps Colonial (Noumea 1980).
- B. Villechelane, "La Caledonie c'est ca! Thio", La France Australe (1977).

#### NEWSPAPERS

- L'Avenir de la Nouvelle Caledonie, (Noumea 1886-1892).
- L'Bataille: Defense de Interets Coiloniaux, (Noumea 1893-1894).
- La Caledonie: Journal Republican, (Noumea 1896-1906).
- L'Independent de la Nouvelle Caledonie, (Noumea 1885-1888).
- Le Moniteur de la Nouvelle Caledonie, (Noumea 1868).
- La Nouvelle Caledonie, (Noumea 1879).
- Le Progres de la Nouvelle Caledonia, (Noumea 1881-1884).
- Le Progres de Noumea, (Noumea 1884-1885).

DANCING YET TO THE DIM DIM'S BEAT  
CONTEMPORARY POETRY IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Richard Hamasaki

CHANGE

Blue mountains turned  
 into red battered hills.  
 While smoking waterfalls  
 dried on brown cliffs.  
 Faint smoke from gardens  
 trailing into clear air  
 all smothered now by  
 black industrial fog.  
 ...Brown houses of old replaced  
 by white houses without 'doors.'  
 Naked breasts once standing up proudly  
 now shrink and sweat in 'breastbags.'  
 O New Guinea!  
 You are changing fast in Niugini.

Bede Dus Mapun<sup>1</sup>

In September of 1972, three years before celebrating its full independence from Australia, Papua New Guinea (PNG) held its own National Writers Day. On that day, according to Elton Brash, Administrator L.W. Johnson addressed the audience and put forth a suggestion that "...in a developing country, the writer had a duty to create a national consciousness."<sup>2</sup> University of Papua New Guinea student, black power activist and poet John Kasaipswalova added that the writer had a responsibility to capture and express, contemporaneously, the people's consciousness. Both speakers indicated that

for a fledgling nation, national concerns outweighed the writer's personal interests. Comparing PNG's literary situation to that of African experiences, Brash, then a lecturer in English at the University of Papua New Guinea, recalled an essay, "The Writer in an African State," by Nigerian writer, Wole Soyinka, who stated: "The artist has always functioned in African society as the record of the mores and experience of his society and as the voice of vision in his own time."<sup>3</sup> According to Brash, Soyinka observed four stages in the evolution of an African writer. Papua New Guinea's literary situation could be compared to Soyinka's observations of a creative literature undergoing an evolution common to newly established nations. Brash, interpreting Soyinka, hypothesized that a four-stage evolution was necessary "before a former colony could say it was no longer dominated by colonialism or anti-colonial reactionism."<sup>4</sup>

The first stage covered a period prior to independence. The creative literature in this period expressed hope, a growing awareness, with increasing anger and resentment towards foreign domination. Anti-colonialist literature became dominant. A second phase was then reached with the arrival of independence. A sense of victory and pro-nationalism was a recurrent theme, with anti-colonialism still an important factor. Writers re-affirmed their "identification with the aspirations of nationalism and the stabilisation of society."<sup>5</sup> This period of literature then gave way to a period of disillusionment, which Soyinka identified as the stage in which a majority of African writers presently find themselves: "For the situation in Africa today is the same the world over, it is not one of the tragedies which come of isolated human failures, but the very collapse of humanity."<sup>6</sup> Politicians, not writers, were determining the philosophy and directions of modern

Africa. After political independence, writers had not responded to the country's needs. Soyinka stressed that African writers needed to develop further. Hence, a fourth stage, not yet achieved:

The point in my talk was that the African writer is being caught by events. He is beginning to be a mere chronicler....Even George Orwell, if you like, wrote with a great vision—whether you accept it or not this is a fact! Even Arthur Miller in his Crucible wrote of the beginnings of something terrible within his own society....This does not mean that every African writer has to write in these terms....part of his essential purpose in society is to write with a very definite vision....he must at least begin by exposing the future in a clear and truthful exposition of the present."<sup>7</sup> (Soyinka, pg. 58 discussion)

This paper will examine the contents of pre- and post-independence poetry written in English by many of Papua New Guinea's indigenous writers. These authors, by virtue of publication and continuity, can be considered to be among the major indigenous poets of Papua New Guinea writing in English. This poetry will also be examined against the Brash/Soyinka "theory" concerning the development of literature in newly independent nations. It should be noted that Soyinka's experiences focus on Africa, and do not necessarily apply to Papua New Guinea; furthermore, Brash's interpretations of Soyinka do not necessarily reflect an accurate interpretation of Soyinka's article. The application of this theory to the literature of PNG has been made in order to provide a structure upon which the emergence of a creative written literature in a newly founded nation comprised of 700 different languages can be examined in the context of post-colonialism. The analysis will reveal how political and social situations in PNG from the late 1960s to the present affected the themes and development of this creative literature, and vice versa. Also, perhaps some aspects of contemporary life in PNG can be revealed by examining some of her poets and their works, many of whom were directly or indirectly

associated with the politics and the actors who helped formulate national policies at the time of independence.<sup>8</sup>

Papua New Guinea's creative written literature is not confined to poetry. A significant body of indigenous writing exists in the form of plays, radio drama, short stories, novels, contemporary oral histories and songs, film scripts, and essays. These works have been composed in a variety of languages, including tribal languages, English, Motu, and Tok Pisin. Some authors have also utilized a combination of languages in their written work.<sup>9</sup>

The discussion of Papua New Guinea's creative literature is by no means unique. Analysis of this writing has appeared in book reviews, interviews, literary criticism, editorials, articles, and essays. The depth of this analysis has ranged from the very informal to the academic. Non-indigenous scholars and journalists as well as Papua New Guinean writers have contributed to its study. Extensive bibliographies have also been compiled. Literary journals, newspapers and magazines published in Australia, Fiji, France, Germany, Hawaii, New Zealand, the Philippines, Senegal, the U.S. mainland, and Papua New Guinea itself, have documented the evolution of PNG's creative writing. It should also be noted that Papua New Guinea's emerging indigenous literature is a development that is not unique to the Pacific; rather, it is part of an emerging body of work that embodies a regional creative literature and consciousness. In the past thirty years the Pacific Islands have experienced a series of indigenous and local literary movements radiating out of New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Tahiti, and Hawaii. Ever since the first South Pacific Creative Arts Festival in 1972 there has been a growing awareness of the magnitude of this regional writing.<sup>10</sup>



The Niugini as the poet Mapun saw things fifteen years ago is still changing, but this change can now be viewed from the perspective of independence. Since 1975, PNG has been independent in terms of its status as a nation, answerable to its own government, made up mostly of its own people.

### Decolonization

The first indigenous Papua New Guinean poet writing in English to appear in print, according to most sources, is A. P. Allan Natachee. Natachee, born Avaisa Pirongo, was given his present Apache name by one of his teacher/nun's. He was named after an American Indian hero in a fictional story about cowboys and Indians.<sup>11</sup> In 1940 at the age of 16, Natachee composed this poem:

#### Law and Lore of Nature

According to laws and lore of nature,  
 Man is bound to go on and on,  
 Solving adventure after adventure,  
 With an endlessness leading him on!  
 And for that cause which is yet unseen,  
 And that which is yet unknown:  
 On the morrow it shall be seen!  
 On the morrow it shall be known!...<sup>12</sup>

Natachee was "discovered" by Percy Cochrane, an administrator with the Department of Information and Extension Services who found him writing poetry in his Mekeo village of Amoamo. Both Cochrane and Natachee worked together in the broadcast section in Konedobu.<sup>13</sup> Cochrane helped Natachee guide his work into the Australian anthropological magazine, Oceania. In 1951 Natachee's work "Mekeo Poems and Legends" was published. Professor A.P. Elkin, Oceania

editor also published ten of Natachee's own poems as well. These were rendered in not quite perfect syntax but exacting rhyme:

What Ancestral Wealth and Knowledge?

O stone-age child, why do you like dreaming,  
Of dreams and thoughts of your ancestor?  
Why? Oh why do you continue clinging,  
To way and life of your ancestor?

What sort of wealth did he possess for you,  
And his knowledge of ability?  
None but worthlessness heathen rubbish for sure,  
Is now the cause of stupidity....

Advance Atomic Age

Courageously advance atomic age step by step,  
And crush under your foot our stone age,  
It cannot and will never resist your mighty step,  
Cautiously advance atomic age!

Hark and behold, our stone age is swaying and groaning,  
Right beneath your might step of pain,  
Hatingly and stubbornly resisting and frowning,  
But forever, and ever in vain....<sup>14</sup>

In 1969 Natachee received some rather harsh criticism of these early poems by none other than Ulli Beier himself, then editor of Kovave, Papua New Guinea's first literary magazine. Natachee was considered by Beier to be a "pilot poet," a term coined by J.P. Clark describing the first generation of West African poets many of whom were published in the West African Pilot, Nigeria's first nationalist newspaper. These poets wrote with good intentions but produced very little work of individual quality.<sup>15</sup>

Commenting upon early African writer, Beier wrote in Kovave, "Today we look at them as interesting figures in the social and political history of West Africa, rather than as forerunners of modern African literature."<sup>16</sup> The themes of these poets were remarkably similar to PNG's poets in their initial

stages of creative writing: conflict of cultures; examination of the past, and the struggles against colonialism.

Natachee's early works according to Beier were "patroned" by Australians, and were often broadcast over the Australian Broadcasting Corporation network. The early Natachee condemned his past ("none but worthless heathen rubbish"),<sup>16</sup> praised Britain, and his work was, to use Beier's words, "embarrassing in its naivete."<sup>17</sup> Beier depicts Natachee as a victim of culture contact, of colonialization, "...left helplessly hanging between two worlds and hopelessly admiring what he cannot understand."<sup>18</sup>

In contrast, Natachee's collection of powerfully translated and rendered Mekeo songs appeared in one of Beier's Papua Pocket Poet Series publications in 1968. This example deals with hopelessness and deprivation:

#### Poverty

Poverty, only poverty.  
From what poverty have I come  
to live in poverty?  
From what poverty have I come  
to stand in poverty?  
Poverty, only poverty.

From home of poverty I have come  
to live in poverty  
From home of poverty I have come  
to stand in poverty  
...<sup>19</sup>

Beier's criticism of Natachee's early poems seems didactic. Perhaps he wanted to imply that Natachee could reproduce in English translation the purity and strength of ancient Mekeo songs, yet when it came to writing his own poetry, Natachee suffered from deeply ingrained colonial mimicry and self-denigration. In 1969 Beier observed the beginnings of an indigenous written literature developing in Papua New Guinea. His criticism of Natachee was no doubt intended as a lesson to younger writers.<sup>20</sup>

Beier's article on Natachee served as an example to PNG's aspiring writers of what not to become. In 1968 the first book, an autobiography, by an indigenous Papua New Guinean appeared. Albert Maori Kiki, according to Beier in his preface to Kiki's publication, did not actually write Ten Thousand Years in a Lifetime. It is in fact an oral history recorded on tape and transcribed after several weekly meetings with Kiki sometime in 1967 or early 1968.<sup>21</sup> The Papua Pocket Poet Series (PPPS) appeared in 1968, also initially edited by Beier. A year later Kovave began publication and the first writing contest, sponsored by Robert Boschman was announced.<sup>22</sup> Boschman later became an editor for Papua New Guinea Writing. By the end of 1970 there was something of a literary boom in PNG. The first novel by a Papua New Guinean, The Crocodile by Vincent Eri, was published in Australia by Jacaranda Press; the Papua Pocket Poet Series published 20 volumes from 1968 to 1970; Kovave published four issues of poetry, fiction, essays, drama, folklore and criticism; and Papua New Guinea Writing began an eight-year life, published by the Literature Bureau in 1970.

Significantly, the majority of the major poets being published in PNG were university students. In 1970, of the 20 volumes PPPS had published to date, two contained works by individual poets, one by Prithvindra Chakravarti, then a lecturer at UPNG along with Ulli Beier, entitled Sands Sun Water. Born in India in 1933, Chakravarti arrived in PNG in 1967, the same year as Beier. His influence upon Papua New Guinea writing has yet to be critically examined or acknowledged.<sup>23</sup>

The second volume was published by university student, Kumalau Tawali titled, Signs in the Sky. The first Papua New Guinean writer to publish a collection of poems, Tawali wrote plays and short stories as well. In 1970,

Prompt Theatre in Canberra had performed his drama, "Manki Masta."<sup>24</sup> Tawali's poetry collection was highly creative, well-wrought, and helped stimulate a growing commentary dealing with resentment and reactions to foreign domination and colonialism by Papua New Guinea poets:

The Bush Kanaka Speaks

The kiap shouts at us  
forcing the veins to stand out in his neck  
nearly forcing the excreta out of his bottom  
he says: you are ignorant

He says: you are ignorant,  
but can he shape a canoe,  
tie a mast, fix an outrigger?  
Can he steer a canoe through the night  
without losing his way?  
Does he know when a turtle comes ashore  
to lay its eggs?

...

Every white man the govment sends to us  
forces his veins out shouting  
nearly forces the excreta out of his bottom  
shouting you bush kanaka.

He says: you ol les man!  
Yet he sits on a soft chair and does nothing  
just shouts, eats, drinks, eats, drinks,  
like a woman with a child in her belly.  
These white men have no bones.  
If they tried to fight us without their musiket  
they'd surely cover their faces like women.<sup>25</sup>

Tawali's mixture of Tok Pisin and English anticipated a flood of inventive diction - creative experiment, outright devil-may-care utilization of language, a mixture of both vernacular and Pidgin and even broken English - by the poets who would publish later. "Bush Kanaka Speaks" is one of the first poetic expressions of anger and invective directed against the Australian presence in PNG. However, unlike the more direct and oftentimes blatant anti-colonial poetry that followed, a majority of Tawali's own poetry reveals his concerns over his country and its situation with a controlled sense of reserve:

## Niu

You are the baby that crawls  
too long.  
All the others are walking—  
what has your mother been doing with you?  
Have you been carried too long?  
Have you been fed too much?

...  
One day nobody will be around  
and you will have to carry weight  
if you can't—  
you will fall.  
...<sup>26</sup>

Niu translates as coconut. Tawali is not only speaking about the struggle of a young coconut shoot, but he is referring to nationhood, or Niugini, in Tok Pisin. In a 1970 interview with Tawali, Donald Maynard, founding editor for Papua New Guinea Writing asked Tawali specifically about "Niu" and Tawali replied, "The word "niu" means coconut in my language—In fact you are right when you say that it's an allegory for "New Guinea."<sup>27</sup> Though Tawali has been called "...the most lyrical, least explicitly political of the university poets.", his poetry, reflects both a genuine understanding of his private world and of the world of politics as well as his concern over the destiny of his land and country:<sup>28</sup>

## A Coconut is a Coconut

Disobedient child!  
Whose stomach did you come from?  
Whatever I ask you to do  
you refuse.  
When other boys go fishing  
you sit at home.  
When did you last hold the kua  
to beat sago?  
All you do is "Stay at home,"  
"Stay at home."  
Now that your stomach is empty,  
why don't you eat "Stay at home?"  
Oh! My head!  
Alas the proverb is true:  
"A coconut is always a coconut."  
A boy is always his father.<sup>29</sup>

In the early 1970's Tawali and poet John Kasaipwalova, who were both students at UPNG, often got into disputes regarding politics. Tawali was moderate whereas Kasaipwalova was an active proponent in the "black power" movement prevalent at UPNG in the late '60s and early 1970s. In 1970, in front of an audience of more than 200, mostly comprised of students and staff, Kasaipwalova presented his topic, "Why We Should Hate Whites." A Pacific Islands Monthly article summed up his presentation:

...Kasaipwalova fluently and rationally declared that whites in the territory should be hated in the sense that they should be rejected, and their dominating power structure with them, so the native people could stand up with pride as members of their own race.<sup>30</sup>

Tawali in his 1970 interview with Maynard, editor of Papua New Guinea Writing, responded to one of Maynard's questions, "Do you think the country needs constructive student politicians?"

Yes—there is really no need for us to have such things as "black power" and all this because I think internationally the world has enough troubles already. There are enough racial troubles in the world and the world has shrunk into a small community—there is no need for racial discrimination or racial identification. On the other hand some of our students only create racial disharmony by having such things as this. I would really go all the way with them if they proposed cultural reconstruction or something to do with the unity of the people—then I would go all the way with them—but I completely disagree with such things as the black power movement.<sup>31</sup>

This statement provoked an immediate response by John Kasaipwalova which was published in the subsequent issue of PNGW, titled "What is 'Cultural Reconstruction'???".

One could say that the beginnings of an anti-colonial drive from Niuginians is necessary as the conducive environment; for basically the confusion and non-identity of the black people in Niugini today could be painted within the framework of western colonialism.

Black Power does not seek to create racial disharmony, but harmony between races. This may seem a paradox to the politically naive. But before we can stand with dignity and equality with other human beings of different ethnic origins, we must strike at those that divide and prevent us from so doing.

...

The arts ought to be a mirror for self-examination, where the inconsistencies and situations of human oppression could be expressed. For this to be effective, they must communicate the message to the people with a view to enlightening and transforming our society. This does entail an awareness of past cultures as sources of inspiration, but certainly not an over-emphasis on their reconstruction—for that would be to shut our eyes to the present condition of our people."<sup>32</sup>

In May of 1970 at the Fourth Waigani Seminar, Michael Somare, then a Member of PNG's Second House of Assembly, presented a paper titled, "Political Organization in Niugini." The basic thrust of Somare's paper was to identify the problems of political organizing in Papua New Guinea which needed to be resolved before political power could be shifted from the controls of the colonial administration. The problem of establishing a Niuginian identity was complex. According to Somare Papua New Guinea suffered from a lack of national consciousness; a fragmentation of tribes which hampered national unification; a social and political structure that contained no chiefly system; and finally, no common language. Somare accused the European administration of attempting "to destroy anything organised by Niuginians." He concluded his paper by stating that "...unless there is a true feeling of nationalism and something in common for people to come together and fight for, then we cannot expect results."<sup>33</sup>

PNG student thinkers and poets were responding to each other both through their creative literature as well as their political statements. Many of the key politically active individuals were writers and vice versa.<sup>34</sup>



The Influence of John Kasaipwalova

Australian literary critic, John Beston, in his article, "Chill and Flame: The Poetry of John Kasaipwalova," identified the main theme of Kasaipwalova's poetry as "...the destructive effect of white colonialism on black self-respect in Papua New Guinea." Beston stated that Kasaipwalova's long poem, "Reluctant Flame," had a major impact when it first appeared almost simultaneously in 1971 in Nigeria and PNG. Kasaipwalova's poem was the "...first notable expression of national feeling in PNG."<sup>35</sup>

Kasaipwalova's long poem is a wild, almost uncontrolled work. Aimed at both white and black audiences, its tone is angry, sarcastic, caustic, descriptive and intolerant:

Cold bloodless masks stare me, not for my colour  
But for my empty wealth house and passion logic

...  
Look how orderly fat and silent they float this earth  
With their guns, their airplanes, their cyclone  
Wheels and their bishops

...  
"Masta masta give me more, I will pray, I will obey,  
yes masta truly!"<sup>36</sup>

The poem's 211 lines move through images of black obsequiousness and submission that oppress the narrator of the poem and his world. In the end, Kasaipwalova creates a powerful vision but not until he tears through his soul as if damned. Kasaipwalova addresses several audiences: Papua New Guineans, whites, the black-world, and himself. One of the key lines in the lines in the poem reveals both the exasperation and hope the poet feels, searching:

What is this chill, where is that Flame to warm and melt me?<sup>37</sup>

For poets like Albert Wendt, the chill is racism and all the endless implications of racism through colonial education, the humiliating aspects of

Christianity toward indigenous cultures, and the arrogance of a dominating culture superimposing itself upon another.<sup>38</sup> For Beston the chill "...is that of the 'cold seed' making its roots in the heart of the poet...as freezing body and soul,...a cold wind blowing from the West and its civilization...."<sup>39</sup> For Kasaipwalova, the chill is white oppression in all its manifestations. There is only one way out, through upheaval and violent uprisings:

Each day the weighty cover shrieks arrogantly  
Vowing to crush and smother the tiny flame within that  
pulse

...

I will call my ancestors and all the spirits of my  
grounds and waters

...

Inside each mountain lies a tiny flame cradled and  
weighted above  
People will live, people will die  
But the tiny flame will grow its arms and legs very  
slowly  
Until one day its volcanic pulse will tear the green  
mountain apart...<sup>40</sup>

In 1972 Goodwin, in an article titled "No Stagnant Neutrality," stated that Kasaipwalova's image of the flame was not a statement concerned with "...a nationalist belief in the value of being rooted in the soil of one's native land."<sup>41</sup> Rather, Kasaipwalova's image of the flame encompassed all blacks dominated by white segregation and oppression. "The flame is one of revolt against an alien culture, not one of pride in the soil....His flame is one with the flame of revolt by blacks everywhere against white domination."<sup>42</sup>

The tiny flame within its own fence is burning into  
the icy centres  
Look how the flame came from the ghettos

...

Maybe your vibrant lava will flow to burn  
anew the world  
When Johannesburg and New York is in flames

...

Our reluctant flame is burning disconnected like  
a bush fire  
But one day, one day...one day...<sup>43</sup>

Beston interpreted the flame as "...pictured as tiny but of great potential power."<sup>44</sup> What seems important in light of these commentaries is Kasaipwalova's feelings toward a people—the black race and those of his country:

I cannot in honest clarity show us the way out of  
 our grave  
 Inside, inside, where our eyes do not see there is a  
 Pulse!  
 ...there is a living  
 Memory!<sup>45</sup>

Whether this memory—the inside that the poet refers to—is rooted in the soil, concerns all racial inequity, is nationalistic or simply that between white and black is beside the point. Kasaipwalova was concerned with matters at hand. The poet articulates the unifying forces within his own country:

I go past the Palm Tavern  
 ...  
 People meeting, laughing at Koki  
 ...we say no words, we know  
 ...  
 Wantok we eat our rice and meat together...<sup>46</sup>

His last stanza, in uppercase bold letters, is both a plea and a command. From subservience, to despair and humiliation, to confidence and vision, both external, internal, cerebral and sensual, the poet shouts:

RELUCTANT FLAME OPEN YOUR VOLCANO  
 TAKE YOUR PULSE AND YOUR FUEL  
 BURN BURN BURN BURN BURN  
 LET YOUR FLAMES VIBRATE THEIR DRUMS  
 BURN BURN BURN BURN  
 BURN AWAY MY WEIGHTY ICE  
 BURN INTO MY HEART A DANCING FLAME<sup>47</sup>

"Reluctant Flame" inspired an intellectual debate within Papua New Guinea as well as abroad. The first printing sold out quickly and it evoked international reaction. Through it Papua New Guinea could be seen as one nation, a nation of blacks struggling for dignity and equality. These images

were read and heard by Papua New Guineans, including those who were already in power and who were, in part, responsible for directing their country toward greater autonomy from Australian administrative and bureaucratic controls:

The strongly anti-colonial sentiment it contained, and its call for revolution, jolted the complacency of many expatriates and Papua New Guineans who had already stepped into expatriates' shoes.

["Reluctant Flame"]...succeeded in thrusting before literate Papua New Guineans an awareness of their links with oppressed black brothers in other parts of the world and provided them with a fearless, uncompromising picture of their situation under Western exploitation.<sup>48</sup>

In 1972 Kasaipwalova published a collection of poetry, Hanuabada, through the Papua Pocket Poets Series. Thirteen stanzas long, the title poem never reached the same acclaim as "Reluctant Flame." Hanuabada, the name of an actual shanty town in Port Moresby, comments on cultural loss and addresses the cultural degradation of PNG both symbolically and in actuality.

The late Kristy Powell, of the University of Papua New Guinea, wrote of Kasaipwalova's Hanuabada as a "paradise lost." "Hanubada," Powell interprets, has been glamorized and is part of Kasaipwalova's imagination: "...of all those Trobriand Islanders who returned home after a stint of digging drains in Moresby in the 50s it had been 'Hanubada, my big and beautiful dream village,' but when he sees the real Hanubada he can only cry: ...'O Hanubada! What have they done to you?'"<sup>49</sup>

According to Goodwin, the poem describes "...the ugly, crowded Hanubada section of Port Moresby."<sup>50</sup> Kasaipwalova clearly expressed his devastation over a place imagined, a place destroyed in the mind once perceived in reality. Hanubada is a village, but of a different sort; it represents a place longed for. Once a tiny native settlement, perched on the shoreline, Hanubada transformed as Port Moresby grew. Its relatively modern

construction was the imagined envy of many Papua New Guineans who were not familiar with its urbanized settings:

They told me you were civilized; your iron roofs,  
timber floors, electricity and all

...  
So clean, so educated, so rich, so civilized,  
so new and white...  
When the heavy rains broke our rotten grass roof  
And made me cold and wetted my sleeping mats  
When mud and pigshit smells nearly broke my nose  
When mosquitoes bit me and I hit myself for nothing

...  
One day I will make our grass roofed village like  
Hanuabada  
Iron roofs for grass, timber floors and all...<sup>51</sup>

The poet satirically longs for an ideal, modernized village to be built as his home, based on the idealized Hanuabada model. The narrator, coming from his "primitive village" admired the big houses with water tanks and heaters, neat green lawns, neatly manicured, "Yet somehow my eye felt a strange harshness everywhere...." He finds instead signs ("No Natives Allowed"), guard dogs, wire fences, lighted neon streets, tempting window fronts ("All of them opening their legs to tease my throat"). He visits the harbor and sees nothing but goods and more material wealth being imported into his country. Homes of the wealthy ("like nesting white pigeons") are nestled high above the black shanties. Black women sell their beads, pottery and baskets on the streets.

Hanuabada I mourn for you now—your waters is taken!  
You and I must crawl and beg in our own 'claimed' land.<sup>52</sup>

Finally, the poet admits that "Crying only brings me pains of emptiness" and "Death is more paralyzing than the wounds of honest pains":

I have ripped apart the house of my soul  
To drag before my mirror my naked self<sup>53</sup>

Kasaipwalova's commentary upon himself was a statement to all. The blind embrace and desire for the white man's material culture, the "empty wealth house" if you will, had in part created Hanuabada. He sought to depict these troubled images of colonization both for self-examination and as an exercise in seeking future actions, "To take the unknown jump across the dividing barbed fences." Again, as in "Reluctant Flame" the poet offered no specific solutions; rather, he provided a final image of Hanuabada turning into a flowing river: "Let your sorrows and pains/Run the streets like smashing thunder." He called for action. Something had to be done about the colonial situation and cruelty of oppression and double standards. "Civilized" towns were divided and the health of the house of the soul was critical.

#### A "SILENT" INDEPENDENCE?

From 1972 to 1973 Papua New Guinea headed for self-government, which was finally achieved on December 1, 1973. Independence would arrive two years later. The level of vehement anti-colonialism found in John Kasaipwalova's poetry would never again be reached in the poetry that followed, although similar themes did prevail. A flowering of literature, the arts, theater, and music continued. Aspiring poets of Papua New Guinea such as Jack Lahui, Kama Kerpi, Henginike Riyong and Apisai Enos were active.

In 1971 Enos, author of a collection of poems, High Water, was optimistic regarding nationhood for PNG:

New Guinea, beloved New Guinea  
What do they say about you?

...  
The land of thousand tribes and trails  
primeval forests of termites, leeches and cicadas  
hidden valleys and mountain crags of old  
deep gorges and rugged ranges

...  
land of haus tambaran, dukduk and eravo  
land of kovave masks and gope boards

...  
Don't you know that I am your husband  
betrothed to you in childhood  
promised to you in the womb?  
I have come to celebrate our wedding  
I have come to elope with you  
into better times.<sup>54</sup>

Although Enos, in a later essay, would express serious doubts concerning the viability of creative writing in Papua New Guinea, his call for national priorities remained consistent with his early poem, "Unity":

Old wrinkled womb  
    mother of  
Gamas  
    Markhams  
        Wabags  
            Arowes  
                Kaviengs  
                    and Chimbus  
you who brought forth  
    Manus  
        Sepiks and Tolais  
            Gogodalas  
Kiwais Keremas Dobuans Huris and Motus

...  
Though your blood is their blood  
    your flesh their flesh  
        your mind their mind  
they will not acknowledge their kin  
    and like delta islands they drift  
further apart in pools and streams of blood

Awake mother

...  
    keep them safe under your tapa cloth  
let them recognise each other at last  
    on your breasts.<sup>55</sup>

In 1972, Enos became the editor for Kovave (from 1972 to 1975), and wrote an introspective essay: "Niugini Literature, A View from the Editor."<sup>56</sup> The educational system, he maintained, was an alienating force, separating Papua New Guineans from their own cultural traditions. He saw creative writing as a "gambling game for intellectuals," in which an elite circle was participating. Oral literature was the popular literature which was both integral and functional. It was part of the entire life cycle of Papua New Guineans, present in the social, cultural and political fabric of the society. The present written literature up to 1972 was transitional, used as a political weapon in response to colonialism. It was a polemic exercise and expressed rebellion against alienation, shifting values and social conventions. Adding to this, Enos stated that as yet, "Niugini literature" was not an art form, but merely political literature. He also argued that it was unpopular because it was in English. Not enough time had passed, for the people had not yet developed an appreciation for written literature, not to mention the skill of reading itself. Literature in Pidgin, Motu and other vernaculars was lacking. (In 1974 Papua New Guinea had a national literacy of eleven percent in English and twelve percent in Pidgin.)<sup>57</sup>

Finally, Enos warned against the dangers of replacing the more elaborate and ritualist literature of the oral traditions and art with the present written literature, which he termed idealistic, artificial, and imitative of European traditions. Papua New Guinea's writers needed to create an "acceptable Niuginian English...a national type of English," just as the Americans and Australians had. This was necessary because of the sheer diversity of languages in PNG. Ultimately both the oral tradition as well as



the newer contemporary literature needed to come together to create what Enos felt was "national unity through literature."<sup>58</sup>

In contrast, John Waiko in the same issue of Kovave, called for a "cultural revolution," in which the "role of literature should be able to destroy the present basis of the educational system."<sup>59</sup> He predicted that the system of education in PNG would inevitably lead to a stage where "neo-colonialist" elites within a strongly defined class structure would be running the country. The educational system would cause the people to lose their cultural values. Finally, Waiko predicted a continued dependence on western or westernized powers. The elites had absorbed the colonial system to such an extent as to make the people and country economically dependent.

As a possible remedy, Waiko proposed the establishment of vernacular schools and the production of volumes of literature in the vernacular to encourage a national identity. The present literature, Waiko wrote, was negative, demonstrating a lack of understanding of traditions and traditional lifestyles. He proposed a new literature in the form of dance-drama and traditional story-telling which he envisioned would be produced by the people in the villages then used in public schools. If steps were not taken to find a common tradition in PNG, then "...the elite...will have no alternative except to continue the colonial pattern which does nothing except create a class society."<sup>60</sup>

Even before independence, many of Papua New Guinea's poets and dramatists such as Waiko were concerned with how to achieve national consciousness against countless odds. Stage one of the Brash/Soyinka theory, the period prior to independence which reflects a growing awareness and anger over foreign domination, and stage two, when pro-nationalism and anti-colonialism

dominates the literature, are not quite distinct from each other when applied to PNG. According to Brash, 1968 was a turning point when "a number of significant developments in creative writing and publishing" began to occur.<sup>61</sup> PNG's literature at the "turning point" reflects both growing anger and awareness, coupled with nationalistic themes. There are also examples of resistance to nationalism in the poetry written before independence as well. In fact, stage three - when disillusionment over national ills and resentment toward insufficient change within the newly-formed government - seems to arrive simultaneously with independence. Many of PNG's poets reveal disparate themes related to Independence Day "celebrations." For Papua New Guinea, stages one through three, occurred rapidly. One could say that for many Papuans, Bougainvilleans, Highlanders, and "micronationals" alike, the "union" of Papua New Guinea and its independence was "a crude marriage of convenience."<sup>62</sup> Many voices can be heard in Papua New Guinea's writers. And rarely does the writing indicate "unity." In Africa, the third stage of writing was the present dilemma. Soyinka observed the stage of disillusionment to contain an absence of vision on the writer's part as well.<sup>63</sup>

After Independence Day, Sept. 16, 1975, instead of a new wave of literature celebrating independence or a fresh burst of anti-colonial memories to remind readers of past struggles, poetic output declined. A Papua Pocket Poet publication called Siboda Henari (Independence), a small anthology consisting of seven PNG poets was an exception. Of the seven, only two, Henginike Riyong and Jacob Simet, were published veterans of the craft. Riyong published one poem, "Come Under My Wings" expressing irony and almost defying the circumstances of PNG's independence:

...  
 Men of tomorrow,  
 Men of future,  
 You are after pants that are not yours,  
 You are after meat that belongs to others.  
 Pigs are your possessions,  
 Shells are your wealth.  
 The ancestors of your fathers  
 The spirits of your ancestors  
 Are watching you.

...  
 Come and hide under my wings,

...  
 When you come back  
 Don't be surprised.  
 My sons and daughters,  
 We will all be under one ruler.  
 The bushes and the thorns  
 The green leaves, the soft grass  
 Will be with us.  
 O, men of tomorrow  
 O, the rebuilders of my villages  
 Come under my wings.<sup>64</sup>

Simet's poem is no less ironic. His poem "Independence" is not a feasting, dancing, time of celebration, rather:

It is the third crow:  
 The lark begins to cry,  
 The dogs are howling,  
 Heralding the spirits of darkness,  
 Returning to their niches,

...  
 ...prepare for the life,  
 Within independence,  
 Which is here,  
 And nothing can stop it.<sup>65</sup>

Papua New Guinea Writing also published a section called "Independence Special." A listing of the titles is sufficient enough to get the gist of the poetry within: "Peace," "A Dream of Independence," "The One Called Independence," "I Am the Boss," "Happy Independence," and "Siboda Henari." Two poems expressed confusion: "What Is It?" and "What Are You?"<sup>66</sup>

Nigel Krauth, perhaps the most knowledgeable and committed researcher and essayist regarding the contemporary literature of Papua New Guinea, though

rarely hesitating to be critical when necessary, identified the period between 1968-73 as the first phase of Papua New Guinea writing.<sup>64</sup> He called this a period of innocence. Keeping the Enos and Waiko articles in mind, however, it should be noted that this first phase represented a period of extremes during which the dialogue and the creativity of western-educated Papua New Guineans reached public forums as never before. This was also a period unique in the history of Papua New Guinea. The country was experiencing the effects of newly created educational institutions. In 1957, an auxiliary division of the Territory Public Service was formed by the Australian administration to train Papua New Guineans for the civil service.<sup>68</sup> The Administrative College was founded in 1964, the University of Papua New Guinea in 1966, and the Goroko Teacher's College in 1967. Beier describes the first four or five years of Papua New Guinean literature "as a literature of decolonisation."<sup>69</sup> Some of the newly educated writers had slipped easily into the shoes of the whites who were in power, but many others had rebelled.

Soyinka's first and second stages of evolution can be applied to this period, along with some overlapping into the third stage, disillusionment over national ills despite independence, as evidenced by Riyong and Simet's poems. The question of independence for PNG was certainly not a simple one and the variations in the poetic content of Papua New Guinea's poets reveal this.

Interestingly the period between 1974-5 has been described by Krauth and others as a "fallow" one, a period of literary "silence," where "inner activity, the developments beneath the surface," were not reflected in the writing of this time period.<sup>70</sup> Taban Lo Liyong, then chairman of the literature department at UPNG from 1975 to 1977, linked the suppression of development of the indigenous literature to the lack of publishing prospects

for PNG writers.<sup>71</sup> Krauth pointed to what he called a "publisher's silence." The possibility of the dissolution of copyright laws after the Australians left and the unsuccessful experiences of publishers in PNG previous to independence were held to be partly responsible. He also suggested that Papua New Guinean writers were simply sitting on their works, waiting for copyright laws to be enacted.

Perhaps another cause of this silent period was the departure of the more experienced and charismatic writers from the university throughout the early 1970s. Kamalau Tawali, involved with the Moral Rearmament movement, had left the country for a number of years. Leo Hannett, one of PNG's first dramatists left for Bougainville in 1973, and became deeply involved in the secessionist movement prior to independence. Kasaipwalova resigned as president of the Students Representative Council in 1972 and left for the Trobriands to organize the Kabisawali, a communal, self-help, Movement. John Waiko left Port Moresby to help organize the Binandere, and poet Bede Dus Mapun left to work with his people as well. Literary catalyst and original collaborator with many of PNG's early creative writers, Ulli Beier, had also been away for three years, directing the Institute of African Studies at the University of Ife, in Nigeria from 1971 to 1974.<sup>72</sup>

The cause of this exodus from Port Moresby is probably due to several factors. Unlike other third world countries approaching independence, censorship did not prevail in Papua New Guinea. In fact, "radical literature was positively encouraged."<sup>73</sup> The early writers who were for the most part university students, simply may have outgrown their environment. Many of them were no doubt concerned over the effects of nationhood in their own homelands. Still others possibly saw opportunities elsewhere, in the form of

politics, the civil service, and furthering their academic interests. At the zenith of this flowering of written literature, their works drew audiences both within and without PNG, readily attracting publishers. Most importantly, the periods between 1968 and 1975 were exciting and crucial years, with the final stages of political transition both a highly localized as well as a regional issue. As Kasaipwalova put it:

...it is most necessary for us to come to terms with the real interests of our own village people without generalising about the fairly diverse rural populations of Papua New Guinea.

It had been necessary to break with the work of theories and philosophies in the abstract and engage in the practicalities of the real world. The experience and the practical skills we are developing can never be taught to us from the sacred books of the university.<sup>74</sup>

#### "Dancing Yet to the Dim Dim's Beat"?

If the years between 1968 and 1973 produced all the excited energy of the birth of a literature, perhaps the recent silence is the stunned realisation that the infant is a bastard."<sup>75</sup>

In 1964 Papua New Guinea held its first national election. A year later, eight (some sources say thirteen) young public servants, a majority of whom were studying at the Administrative College in Port Moresby, formed a group called the Bully Beef Club.<sup>76</sup> Originally a social club, named after the bully beef consumed from tin cans, this group of men and one woman, began discussing politics. By April of 1966 the group had formed a "Committee of Ten." The committee addressed issues of wages; direct departmental administrative control by elected officials rather than by directives from the Australian government; the abolition of special electorates for Australians only; a simplification in the civil service structure, and citizenship for Papuans and

New Guineans in their own country.<sup>76</sup> By June of 1967 the Pangu Pati was formed which included Michael Somare, Albert Maori Kiki and Oala Oala-Rarua. Before the end of 1975 all three would be published authors as well as powerful elected officials of high caliber.<sup>77</sup>

In 1975, the year of Independence for PNG, both Papua Pocket Poet Series and Kovave ceased publication. Papua New Guinea Writing had become more of a mass audience vehicle catering to school children and government workers as well as the general public. Furthermore, its format did not allow for deeply critical writing and did not feature substantial works of any one writer.

A year later, the first Independent Papua New Guinea Writers' Conference was held from July 1 to 4. The organizers of the conference sought a wide exchange of ideas. Samoan poet and writer Albert Wendt, Maori poet Hone Tuwhare and writer Patricia Grace were invited along with Aboriginal poet Kath Walker, Ugandan writer Okot P'bitek, Kole Omotoso from Nigeria, Edwin Thumboo from the University of Singapore and Theo Luzuka from Ghana.<sup>78</sup>

On the first day of the conference an article by Lo Liyong appeared in the Papua New Guinea Post-Courier. At the time, Lo Liyong, Ugandan literary critic, poet, folklorist and fiction writer was director of the Literature Department at UPNG. According to Lo Liyong, a group calling itself "the Apostles" had formed at UPNG and allied itself with the Bully Beef Club in the late 1960s. The Apostles were students who, according to Liyong, were the "core of militancy in the University," awake in the fight for national independence and leading toward the integration of eating and drinking places.<sup>79</sup> All of the Apostles were published writers, and the "path for political independence of Papua New Guinea was charted." Recounting the history of the Bullybeef Club (the "bulls"), the founding of the Pangu Pati in

1967 and the relationship between a core group of militant students at UPNG (the Apostles), Lo Liyong drew a picture of a past relationship between writers and certain political leaders and vice versa:

Between the apostles and the bullybeefers, the path for political independence of Papua New Guinea was charted.

Between them, too, we now have the leading political leaders, civil servants, businessmen, and secessionists.

But, more to our point, all the apostles are published writers; most of the bullybeefers are published writers. It is therefore right to say the major literary activities of the sixties and early seventies were the creations of the bulls and the apostles.<sup>80</sup>

Lo Liyong added that the period of protest literature was over and that writers of PNG needed to do some self-criticism. He asked when the era of trial pieces would end and major work begin. Finally Lo Liyong emphasized that Papua New Guinean writers should form a writer's union in order to protect their copyrights and to encourage the growth of writing in PNG.

John Kasaipwalova responded to Lo Liyong's article. He called for a renewal of a common aim of both the original "bulls" and the "apostles." Though the writers had broken off with the university and had returned to their people, these "apostles" were now needed, said Kasaipwalova, to give the "bulls" some help in getting back on track—back to the original goals of the 1972 Eight Point Plan.<sup>81</sup> Kasaipwalova predicted a new literature, stating that it was up to former writers to "put aside some of our pride" and begin creating a literature reflecting "a vibrant developing society" committed to the Eight Point Plan.<sup>82</sup>

After the writers' conference, Jack Lahui, editor of Papua New Guinea Writing commented that a wide exchange of dialogue between the overseas writers and the writers from PNG had taken place. During the years following



the early 1970s, "a vacuum in our history" had been created because of an absence of dialogue and a lack of "decisiveness" by writers. He added:

I for one believe that the conference was well timed to coincide with this period of decolonisation where unless we are on the alert will our selves have created a 'literary suicide.'<sup>83</sup>

Ulli Beier in an article published a year earlier identified the specific areas which Papua New Guinean writers had yet to explore:

Papua New Guinean writers have not yet tried to write about the current political tensions: separatist movements, political pressure groups, friction between young radicals and conservatives, conflict between village aspirations and central government, the behind the scene pressures of big business on the national government, and the like.<sup>84</sup>

The literary situation continued to get worse. According to poet and novelist Russell Soaba in a January 1979 interview, the only outlet for writers in PNG was Papua New Guinea Writing which ceased operations at the end of 1978. Soaba also mentioned the New Nation, a glossy, superficial vehicle for literature interested mostly in writers who wrote in a Christian vein. The Institute for Papua New Guinea Studies, which came out with Soaba's first novel Wanpis in 1977, had no plans for publishing indigenous writers, nor did publishers like Kristen Pres or Robert Brown and Associates, based in PNG.<sup>85</sup>

In 1980 Bernard Minol, senior lecturer in literature at UPNG, published an article in the Times of Papua New Guinea called "The Death of PNG Writing." Minol's article was straight-forward: "The question that readers in PNG, the Pacific, and the world are asking is why has writing in Papua New Guinea come to a premature halt?"<sup>86</sup> He identified two veteran writers who were still active, Russell Soaba and Paulias Matane, author of no less than six novels at the time. New writers on the scene were also identified, including PNG naturalized citizen John Kolia, author of ten novels, Benjamin Umba and Nora

Vagi Brash. He failed to mention John Kasaipwalova who, following his own advice, had written a new form of literature for PNG audiences, a poem/drama called a kesawaga, or "Kiriwina ballet." The long dramatic poem, "Sail the Midnight Sun," had been described as a "balance of opposites," focusing on "the male and the female...night and day, the sacred and the profane, society and the individual."<sup>87</sup> Marriage, death, magic, trade cycles had all been addressed in this work based on Papua New Guinean life, stated the reviewer. The work had appeared consecutively for four weeks in the weekly section of the Papua New Guinea Post-Courier.

Minol identified two major constraints which were inhibiting the output of PNG writers: scarcity of willing publishers and the lack of an interested reading public. The scant literary output of writers reflected the post-independence situation in PNG since "...universities in this country have become 'manpower training institutions...." In other words the liberal arts had been discouraged at the university level in favor of career-oriented course work.<sup>88</sup>

Ulli Beier in his preface to his 1980 compilation, The Voices of Independence, New Black Writing from Papua New Guinea echoed Minol's concerns:

The writers' position has become more difficult and more ambiguous since independence. In the late sixties the young angry writers were seen as natural allies by Papua New Guinea's politicians. The writers then helped to form public opinion and political consciousness and exercised some influence on the stance of leading politicians. But now the government is sensitive to criticism, and many politicians fail to distinguish between issues and personalities. Writers on the whole have been tolerated rather than encouraged. There are few intellectuals in parliament, and the leaders of the nation are pragmatic men not given to ideologies.<sup>89</sup>

In 1980 Kumalau Tawali, veteran poet and one time director of the Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies (IPNGS) attended a 3-day Unesco seminar in Sydney on book development in the western Pacific. He identified at least four problems contributing to the lack of creativity by PNG writers; the former writers were too busy as executives or administrators; no publishing company existed in the country whom the writers could trust or rely upon; there existed very little continuous contact with outside writers for encouragement and inspiration; and finally, there was no funding from either the government or other sources which could help the writers from Papua New Guinea.<sup>90</sup>

Two significant publications were introduced in 1980. A new literary magazine, Ondobondo (a Binandere word for festival or singing), originally edited by Alan Chatterton and Ganga Powell had a formidable editorial board and advisory committee including Minol, Soaba, Chakravarti, dramatist Arthur Jawodimbari, and Kasaipwalova. Ondobondo was originally issued as a "forum for young writers," and has appeared annually to date, published by the Literature Department at UPNG. Several experienced poets, Russell Soaba, Jack Lahui, and Kaumalau Tawali are represented in this publication as well as playwrights and short story writers.

In 1980, The Times of Papua New Guinea announced the publication of another magazine, Bikmaus, a "journal of Papua New Guinean affairs, ideas and the arts."<sup>91</sup> Bikmaus published quarterly by the Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies, has not yet shown much leadership in creating a significant forum for Papua New Guinean poets. It has, however, produced some literary criticism focused on the contemporary creative literature of Papua New Guinea. Poet Vincent Warakai, a 1978 graduate from UPNG, contributed a poem that sets an

essential mood. Like PNG's political "watchdog" poets of the late 1960's and early 1970's, Warakai has commented upon, and documented a part of his era, as well as crafted his poetry to convey his particular thoughts with artistic integrity. The controversies of Independence in Papua New Guinea are far from resolved:

Dancing Yet to the Dim Dim's Beat

We are dancing  
 Yes, but without leaping  
 For the fetters of dominance  
   still persist  
Yes, still insist  
On dominating  
 Holding us down

We have been dancing  
Yes, but not for our own tune  
 For we are not immune  
Yes, for our truly, our own truly  
Music of life is eroding  
Yes, the mystic tune holds  
Us spellbound  
 Our independence is abused

...

We have been dancing  
Yes, but the euphoria has died  
It is now the dull drumming  
Yes, of the flat drums  
 Thud dada thud da thud dada thud  
Yes, It is signalling not the bliss  
 But the impending crisis.<sup>92</sup>

No Endings

As of 1983 the educational system in Papua New Guinea had not yet introduced literature as a subject in its primary or secondary educational curriculum. William McGaw in a 1983 article for Bikmaus titled "The Role of Literature in a Newly Independent Country," called this a tragedy for PNG's writers and students:

"To deprive a child of literature is to starve his imagination. To deprive him of his own nation's literature is to deny him his cultural self."<sup>93</sup>

In 1984, Ganga Powell published an introspective look at the past and present problems facing writers in PNG in an article titled "Looking Thru Those Eyeholes: The Dilemma of the PNG Writer in the 80s."<sup>94</sup> She cited four major problems: a formal education (including the study of English), in many cases, alienates the educated from the non-educated; PNG writers do not yet have a "strong critical tradition based on western poetics and aesthetics," resulting in an unawareness of both vernacular and the imported traditions; traditional oral creativity has never been a continuum developed in Papua New Guinean writers; and finally, a philosophical base has not been created. This philosophical base has not been created. This philosophical base is necessary in order to reassess deficiencies in languages, deficiencies of a critical climate for writers, and the necessity of researching the past.<sup>94</sup>

With the possible introduction of the Niugini Television Network by 1986-87, the writers of Papua New Guinea face an evergrowing challenge.<sup>95</sup> Contemporary written creative literature by indigenous Papua New Guineans is less than 20 years old excepting Natachee, who at age 62 was recently a poet-in-residence at the University of Papua New Guinea.<sup>96</sup> In September of 1983, the Papua New Guinea Writers' Union was organized. Regis Stella, principle architect of the group, felt that a Union was needed in order to support established writers and encourage younger writers in helping them to gain access to publishers in PNG and abroad. The Union was also concerned about the absence of copyright laws.<sup>97</sup>

With Ondobondo and Bikmaus presently available to PNG writers, and with establishment of Owl Books (published by UPNG, Prithvindra Chakravarti, series editor) now diversifying into various disciplines (Owl Poetry Paperbacks, Owl Drama Paperbacks, and Owl Bibliography Paperbacks) the future looks promising. Russell Soaba is perhaps an excellent example of a writer who will most likely persevere:

"The story now is that a few of us are soul-searching types of creative artists. This should compel us to go on writing and writing. Those of us who lived through pre-independence period have this experience of establishing a community, have the experience of seeing something done—we want our independence, we told ourselves: OK let's have it—we did have it—after which we became satisfied all of a sudden but there were quite a number of us left who were much more serious than what we were. Literature may have died down in Papua New Guinea but there are quite a number of writers who feel the urge to express ourselves.<sup>98</sup>

Soyinka's observations concerning the development of creative literature in post-colonial Africa can be applied very loosely when examining PNG's contemporary poetry. Papua New Guinea poets have articulated Soyinka's three stages in varying degrees of intensity: the anti-colonial, the pro-nationalistic, and the expressed disillusionment and even cynicism after the arrival of independence. The next stage, which has yet to be realized in Africa, according to Soyinka, is also true of PNG. Brash's interpretation of Soyinka is a bit simplistic: "a state of increased political maturity and national stability when the re-examination of national priorities can take place in an atmosphere that is relatively free of anti-colonial paranoia or blind patriotic fervor."<sup>99</sup> Soyinka's concern for writers in African states was more philosophical. Writers needed to rise above the mere chronicling of events. Soyinka felt that African writers had not yet begun to write with great vision, that is, not only record the "mores and experience of his

society" but expose the future "in a clear and truthful exposition of the present."<sup>100</sup> In other words, the writer had to understand his own importance as a writer, and thus begin to anticipate his society, providing understanding of future directions in terms of the present, rather gloomy, situation.

It must be noted that attempting to fit a literature into any evolution theory is academic at best. In this case the Brash/Soyinka "theory" helps gives structure and understanding to Papua New Guinea's creative literature and its politics. It is possible that if the younger as well as the more experienced writers continue a dialogue publicly with their country's political leaders and legislators, and vice versa, a national stability and consciousness may well develop, and the creative writing may one day reflect this. On the surface, educational needs and especially resolving language problems may be a few of the keys that can provide a dynamic environment for Papua New Guinea's creative writers. On the other hand, provincial, district, village, and regional forms of expression and themes will most likely perservere. Soyinka saw both George Orwell and Arthur Miller writing the "beginnings of something terrible" happening in their societies. Whether or not PNG writing "evolves" in the direction Soyinka indicates as a necessary development remains to be seen. Whatever the case, poets like Russell Soaba will continue their tradition, combining both the ancient and the modern. Politics and literature in Papua New Guinea will no doubt continue to be integral. Subramani, in his recently published South Pacific Literature, perhaps says it best, with more help from George Orwell:

To some extent literature cannot divorce itself from politics. George Orwell is by and large correct maintaining that "There is no such thing as genuinely non-political literature, at least of all in an age like our own, when fears, hatreds, and loyalties of a directly political kind are near to the surface of everyone's consciousness." The statement has particular relevance for South Pacific literature. There is an inherited political element in it because it has emerged as part of a counter-ideology to colonialism.<sup>101</sup>



# FOOTNOTES

1. Bebe Dus Mapun, Kovave, Vol. 3, No. 1, Nov. 1971, 25.
2. Elton Brash, "Creative Writing, Literature and Self-Expression in Papua New Guinea," Australian Literary Studies, Vol. 6, No. 2, Oct. 1973, 170.
3. Wole Soyinka, "The Writer in an African State," Transition, Vol. 6, No. 31, June/July 1967, 13.
4. Brash, op. cit. 171.
5. Soyinka, op. cit. 12.
6. Soyinka, op. cit. 12.
7. Soyinka responded to his paper, "The Writer in a Modern African State," in a discussion panel. Both essay and discussion panel appeared in The Writer in Modern Africa, (New York, 1969), 14-21, 58; this article is a slightly revised version of the earlier Transition essay.
8. This paper was originally written for Professor Brij Lal, for his course, "Pacific Seminar: Melanesia," History 675. It was reworked the following semester in his "Pacific Research Seminar", History 676. The author would like to thank and acknowledge Roberta Sprague for her invaluable and extensive editorial comments, as well as suggestions from Paul D'Arcy, David Richardson, and Chantal Ferarro. Portions of this paper have also been extracted from papers written for Terence Wesley-Smith and Richard Herr.
9. Non-indigenous writers, especially Australians, have written fiction and verse with New Guinea settings since the early 1870s. See Nigel Krauth's New Guinea Images in Australian Literature, (Queensland, 1982), for an in depth anthology of creative writing on Papua New Guinea by Australian writers.
10. Subramani has identified six regions of contemporary literature in the Pacific Islands. See Subramani's recent publication, South Pacific Literature, from Myth to Fabulation, (Suva, 1985), for an indepth study of the literature of eleven English-speaking Commonwealth countries served by the University of the South Pacific.
11. Ulli Beier, "'Cautiously Advance Atomic Age': A Papuan Pilot Poet," Kovave, pilot issue, 1969, 40-44.
12. A.P. Allan Natachee, interview, "Natachee Distinguished Poet of Papua New Guinea," Papua New Guinea Writing, No. 7, Sept. 1972, 12-13; and from an article by Olaf Ruhen, "The Artistic Ones May Save the Future for Papua New Guinea," Pacific Islands Monthly, Vol. 44, No. 9, Sept. 1973, 71-73.
13. Natachee, op. cit. 12.

14. Natachee in Oceania, Vol. 22, No. 2, Dec. 1951, 148-161.
15. Beier, op. cit. 40.
16. Beier, op. cit. 40.
17. Natachee op cit. Oceania, 150.
18. Beier, op. cit. 40.
19. Beier, op. cit. 43.
20. Subramani acknowledged Ulli Beier's contributions to the contemporary literature of Papua New Guinea as "spectacular." Beier arrived in Papua New Guinea in 1967 from Ibadan, Nigeria. Since 1950, Beier had worked first as a tutor then as associate professor at the University of Ibadan where he founded the 'Mbari' Writers and Artists Club. Beier was also the director of the Institute of African Studies at the University of Ife, Nigeria, from 1971 to 1974 and director of the Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies from 1974 to 1978. Responsible for founding two important cultural and literary journals in Nigeria, Odu and Black Orpheus, Beier also helped establish Kovave, the first literary journal of Papua New Guinea, and Giribori, a journal of Papua New Guinea cultures. Subramani stated: "The main catalyst here (PNG) was Ulli Beier whose experience in Africa, and his position at the University of Papua New Guinea, plus his exceptional talents as a teacher and editor, enabled him to spearhead a surge of literary expression at the University. His influence went beyond literature to a range of other forms of creativity from painting to music, dance, screen printing, and choreography." Subramani, South Pacific Literature, (Suva, 1985), x.
21. Ulli Beier, preface to Albert Maori Kiki, Ten Thousand Years in a Lifetime, (Melbourne, 1982).
22. No author of article cited, "Writing Contest Has More Prizes Ready," PNG Courier, 19 April 1973, 29.
23. Prithvindra Chakravarti, Sun Sand Water, Papua Pocket Poets Series, Vol. 18, (Port Moresby, 1970). In 1986 Chakravarti was arrested for allegedly absconding from Papua New Guinea with cartons filled with PNG manuscripts. He was accused of illegally taking them out of the country.
24. Ulli Beier, editor, Five New Guinea Plays, (Queensland, 1971), ix.
25. Kumalau Tawali, Signs in the Sky, Papua Pocket Poets Series, No. 19, (Port Moresby, 1970), n.p.
26. Tawali, op. cit. n.p.
27. Donald Maynard, "An Interview with Kumalau Tawali," Papua New Guinea Writing, No. 2, Dec. 1970, 13.
28. Don Woolford, "New Guinea's New Writers Wave the Banner of Nationalism," Pacific Islands Monthly, Vol. 41, No. 12, Dec. 1971, 49.

29. Tawali, op. cit. n.p.
30. No author cited, "Saying What You Think on NG," Pacific Islands Monthly, Vol. 41, No. 7, July 1970, 45.
31. Tawali in Maynard, op. cit. 13.
32. John Kasaipwalova, "What Is 'Cultural Reconstruction'???" Papua New Guinea Writing, No. 3, Mar. 1971, 16.
33. Michael Somare, "Political Organisation in Niugini," Overland, No. 47, Autumn, 1971, 30-31.
34. Nigel Krauth, "Politics and Identity in Papua New Guinean Literature," Mana, Vol. 2, No. 2, May 1978, 45-58.
35. John Beston, "Chill and the Flame: The Poetry of John Kasaipwalova," Meanjin Quarterly, Vol. 40, No. 4, Dec. 1981, 480.
36. John Kasaipwalova, Reluctant Flame, Papua Pocket Poets Series, Vol. 29, (Port Moresby 1971), n.p.
37. Kasaipwalova, op. cit. n.p.
38. Albert Wendt, "Towards a New Oceania," Mana, Vol. 1, No. 1, Jan. 1976, 49-60.
39. Beston, op. cit. 481.
40. Kasaipwalova, op. cit. n.p.
41. K.L. Goodwin, "No Stagnant Neutrality," Kovave, Vol. 4, No. 1, Nov. 1972, 50.
42. Goodwin, op. cit. 50.
43. Kasaipwalova, op. cit. n.p.
44. Beston, op. cit. n.p.
45. Kasaipwalova, op. cit. n.p.
46. Kasaipwalova, op. cit. n.p.
47. Kasaipwalova, op. cit. n.p.
48. Nigel Krauth, "A Postmortem of Papua New Guinea Literature," Papua New Guinea Writing, No. 25, Mar. 1977, 19.
50. Goodwin, op. cit. 51.
51. John Kasaipwalova, Hanuabada, Papua Pocket Poet Series, Vol. 31, (Port Moresby, 1972), n.p.

52. Kasaipwalova, op. cit. n.p.
53. Kasaipwalova, op. cit. n.p.
54. Apisai Enos, High Water, Papua Pocket Poet Series, Vol. 24, 1971, n.p.
55. Enos, op. cit. n.p.
56. Apisai Enos, "Niugini Literature, A View from the Editor," Kovave, Vol. 4, No. 1, Nov. 1972, 46-49.
57. Kristy Powell, "Some Perspectives on Papua New Guinea Writing," Papua New Guinea Writing, No. 16, Dec. 1974, 13-24.
58. Enos, op. cit. 48.
59. John Waiko, "The Place of Literature in PNG Education," Kovave, Vol. 4, No. 1, Nov. 1972, 43.
60. Waiko, op. cit. 45.
61. Brash, op. cit. 168.
62. James Griffin, et al. Papua New Guinea: A Political History (Victoria, 1979), 209.
63. An interesting contrast between African and PNG students has been noted by Griffin: "Students were apparently not as detached from their roots as some of the early critics of the founding of a university of PNG feared they would be. The decision not to have tertiary students trained abroad had the consequence of much less alienation than had occurred in Africa." Griffin, op. cit. 202.
64. Henginike Riyong in Siboda Henari, edited by Prithvindra Chakravarti, Papua Pocket Poets Series, (Port Moresby, 1975), n.p.
65. Jacob Simet in Siboda Henari, op. cit. n.p.
66. Jack Lahui, editor, Papua New Guinea Writing, No. 19, Sept. 1975, 14-15.
67. Nigel Krauth, "'Unfolding Like Petals': The Developing Definition of the Writer's Role in Modern Papua New Guinean Literature," ACLAS Bulletin, 5th series, No. 1, July 1978, 6.
68. Oala Oala-Rarua, "Race Relations," Papua New Guinea: Prospero's Other Island, (Sydney, 1971), 136-141.
69. Ulli Beier, "The Cultural Dilemma of Papua New Guinea," Meanjin Quarterly, Vol. 34, No. 3, Sept. 1975, 307.
70. Krauth, op. cit. 7.
71. Taban Lo Liyong, "Let's Be a Little Less Serious," Papua New Guinea Post-Courier, 1 July 1976, 5.

72. Jack Lahui, editorial, Papua New Guinea Writing, No. 23, Sept. 1976, 2; Griffin, op. cit. 202-4; Powell, op. cit. 24.
73. Krauth, op. cit. 1.
74. John Kasaipwalova, "For Bulls and Apostles...A Common Aim," Papua New Guinea Post-Courier, 9 July 1976, 4.1980, 14.
75. Nigel Krauth, ACLAS Bulletin, 1978, op. cit. 4.
76. Albert Maori Kiki, Ten Thousand Years in a Lifetime, (Melbourne, 1982); Michael Somare, Sana, (Port Moresby, 1975); Don Woolford, op. cit. 49 and 111.
77. Beier in preface to Kiki, op. cit.; Taban Lo Liyong, "First Independent Papua New Guinea Post-Courier, 1 July 1976, 5.
78. No author cited, Papua New Guinea Post-Courier, 24 June 1976, 9; Jack Lahui, editorial, Papua New Guinea Writing, No. 23, Sept. 1976, 2.
79. Lo Liyong, op. cit. 5.
80. Lo Liyong, op. cit. 5.
81. John Kasaipwalova, Papua New Guinea Post-Courier, op. cit. 4.
82. The Eight Point Plan, a formulation of national goals, was promulgated in December of 1972. Described by Griffin as "somewhat ambiguous, even inconsistent, program...[it] was to become as much a catch-phrase for critics as a signpost for policy-makers. Succinctly, the eight aims were localisation, equal distribution of incomes and services, decentralisation, small-scale industry, self-reliance in production, self-reliance in the raising of revenue, equality for women and government control of the economy where necessary." See Griffin, et al, Papua New Guinea: A Political History, (Victoria, 1979), 188-9, 196.
83. Jack Lahui, op. cit. 2.
84. Ulli Beier, Meanjin Quarterly, op. cit. 308.
85. Russell Soaba, interviewed by Chris Tiffin, Span, No. 8, 1979, 15-30.
86. Bernard Minol, "The Death of PNG Writing," Times of PNG, 26, Sept. 1980, 21.
87. In a review of John Kasaipwalova's "Sail the Midnight Sun," Papua New Guinea Post-Courier, Weekend Magazine section, 5 April 1980, 4.
88. Minol, op. cit. 21.
89. Ulli Beier, Voices of Independence, New Black Writing from Papua New Guinea, (Queensland, 1980), xv-xvi.

90. Kumalau Tawali, "Why PNG Writers Have Stopped Writing," Papua New Guinea Post-Courier, 28 March 1980, 22-27.
91. Announcement, Times of Papua New Guinea, 10 Oct. 1980, 20.
92. Vincent Warakai, in Ondobondo, No. 4, 1984, cover.
93. William McGaw, "PNG: The Role of Literature in a Newly-Independent Country," Bikmaus, Vol. 4, No. 4, Dec. 1983, 10.
94. Ganga Powell, "Looking Thru Those Eyeholes: The Dilemma of the Papua New Guinea Writer in the 80s," Bikmaus, Vol. 5, No. 1, Mar. 1984, 89-93.
95. Times of Papua New Guinea, 25 May 1985. Also, see 2-page advertisement regarding the "Niugini Television Network," The Papua New Guinea Post Courier, 4 June 1985, 8-9. The recent Wingti government will decide about the immediate future for television in Papua New Guinea; in the long-run, television in PNG seems inevitable. See Pacific Islands Monthly, Vol. 57, No. 2, Feb. 1986, 33; and Islands Business, Vol. 12, No. 2, Feb. 1986, 40-41.
96. Kirpal Singh, "Allan Natachee: Poet from PNG," Bikmaus, Vol. 4, No. 4, Dec. 1983, 18-19.
97. Kevin A'Arcy, "The Birth Pains of a Writer's Union," Ondobondo, No. 5, 1984, 30.
98. Soaba, op. cit. 1979, 18.
99. Brash, op. cit. 171.
100. Soyinka, 1969, op. cit. 58.
101. Subramani, South Pacific Literature, from Myth to Fabulation, (Suva, 1985), 154.

BIBLIOGRAPHYArticles

Beier, Ulli. "The Cultural Dilemma of Papua New Guinea," Meanjin Quarterly, Vol. 34, No. 3, Sept. 1975, pp. 302-310.

\_\_\_\_\_. "'Cautiously Advance Atomic Age': A Papuan Pilot Poet," Kovave, pilot issue, n.d.

Beston, John. "Chill and the Flame: The Poetry of John Kasaipwalova," in Meanjin, Vol. 40, No. 4, Dec. 1981, pp. 480-490

Boschman, Roger. "Papua New Guinea Writers' Day: 1974," in Papua New Guinea Writing, No. 12, Dec. 1973, pp. 12.

Brash, Elton. "Creative Writing, Literature and Self-Expression in Papua New Guinea," Australian Literary Series, Vol. 6, No. 2, Oct. 1973, pp. 167-176.

D'Archy, Kevin. "The Birth Pains of a Writer's Union," Ondobondo, No. 5, 1984, pp. 30.

Enos, Apisai. "Niugini Literature, A from the Editor," Kovave, Vol. 4, No. 1, Nov. 1972, pp. 46-49.

Fell, Liz. "D-Day on Islands TV," Islands Business, Vol. 12, No. 2, Feb. 1986.

Goodwin, K.L. "No Stagnant Neutrality," Kovave, Vol. 4, No. 1, Nov. 1972, pp. 50-52

Kasaipwalova, John. "Sail the Midnight Sun," Papua New Guinea Post-Courier, 5 April to 9 May, Weekend Magazine section, 1980.

\_\_\_\_\_. "For Bulls and Apostles...A Common Aim," Papua New Guinea Post-Courier, 9 July 1976, pp. 4.

\_\_\_\_\_. "What is 'Cultural Reconstruction'???", New Guinea Writing, No. 3, Mar. 1971, pp. 14-16.

Krauth, Nigel. "'Unfolding Like Petals': The Developing Definition of the Writer's Role in Modern papua New Guinean Literature," ACLAS Bulletin, 5th series, No. 1, July 1978, pp. 1-13.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Politics and Identity in Papua New Guinean Literature," Mana, Vol. 2, No. 2, May 1978, pp. 45-58.

- \_\_\_\_\_. "A Postmortem of Papua New Guinea Poetry," in Papua New Guinea Writing, No. 25, Mar. 1977, pp. 18-21.
- Lahui, Jack. "Editorial," Papua New Guinea Writing, No. 23, Sept. 1976, p. 2.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Editorial," Papua New Guinea Writing, No. 19, Sept. 1975, p. 2.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Natachee Distinguished Poet of Papua New Guinea," Papua New Guinea Writing, No. 7, Sept. 1972, pp. 12-13.
- Lindfors, Bernth. "Interview with Taban Lo Liyong," ACLALS Bulletin, 5th series, No. 2, Jan. 1979.
- Lo liyong, Taban. "Let's Be a Little Less Serious," Papua New Guinea Post-Courier, 1 July 1976, p. 5.
- Ma'ia'i, Ata. "Albert Maori Kiki: Author and Politician," Pacific Islands Monthly, Vol. 45, No. 3, Mar. 1974, pp. 64.
- Maynard, Donald. "An Interview with Kumalau Tawali," Papua New Guinea Writing No. 2, Dec. 1970, pp. 12-13.
- McGaw, William. "PNG: The role of Literature in a Newly Independence Country," Bikmaus, Vol. 4, No. 4, Dec. 1983.
- Minol, Bernard. "The Death of PNG Writing," The Times of Papua New Guinea, 26 Sept. 1980, p. 21.
- Oala-Rarua, Oala. "Race Relations," Papua New Guinea: Prospero's Other Island, Angus and Roberston, Sydney, 1971.
- Powell, Ganga. "Looking Thru Those Eyeholes: The Dilemma of the Papua New Guinea Writer in the 80s," Bikmaus, Vol. 5, No. 1, Mar. 1984.
- Powell, Kristy. "Some Perspectives on Papua New Guinea Writing," in Papua New Guinea Writing, No. 16, Dec. 1974, pp. 13-24.
- Ruhen, Olaf. "The Artistic Ones May Save the Future for Papua New Guinea," Pacific Islands Monthly, Vol. 44, No. 9, Sept. 1973, pp. 71-73.
- Singh, Kirpal. "Allan Natachee: Poet from PNG," Bikmaus, Vol. 4, No. 4, Dec. 1983, pp. 18-19.
- Somare, Michael. "Political Organisation in Niugini," in Overland, No. 47, Autumn, 1971, pp. 30-31.
- Soyinka, Wole. "The Writer in an African State," Transition, Vol. 6, No. 31, June/July, 196, pp. 11-13.



- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Writer in a Modern African State," The Writer in Modern Africa, Africana Publishing Corp., New York, 1969.
- Tawali, Kumalau. "Why PNG Writers Have Stopped Writing," Papua New Guinea Post-Courier, 28 Mar. 1980, pp. 22-27.
- Tiffin, Chris. "An Interview with Russell Soaba," Span, No. 8, Apr. 1979, pp. 15-30.
- Waiko, John. "The Place of Literature in PNG Education," Kovave, Vol. 4, No. 1, Nov. 1972, pp. 43-45.
- Wendt, Albert. "Towards a New Oceania," Mana Review, Vol. 1, No. 1, Jan. 1976, pp. 49-60.
- Woolford, Don. "New Guinea's New Writers Wave the Banner of Nationalism," Pacific Islands Monthly, Vol. 42, No. 12, Dec. 1971, pp. 49 and 111.

#### Articles—no author cited

- Pacific Islands Monthly, "PNG Reviews T.V. Priorities," Vol. 57, No. 2, Feb. 1986.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Saying What You Think on NG," Vol. 41, No. 7, July 1970, pp. 45-47.
- Papua New Guinea Post-Courier, two-page ad re: Niugini Television Network, 4 June 1985, pp. 8-9.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Writers from Africa, Pacific," 24 June 1976, p. 9.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Writing contest Has More Prizes Ready," 19 Apr. 1973, p. 29.
- The Times of Papua New Guinea, "Project Agreement" (PNG and "Niugini Television Network"), 25 May 1985.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Bikmaus" 10, Oct. 1980, p. 20.

#### Books

- Beier, Ulli. Voices of Independence, New Black Writing from Papua New Guinea, University of Queensland Press, St. Lucia, 1980.
- Chakravarti, Prithvindra. Sands Sun Water, Papua Pocket Poets, Port Moresby, Vol. 18, 1970.
- Enos, Apisai. High Water, Papua Pocket Poets, Port Moresby, Vol. 24, 1971.

Eri, Vincent. The Crocodile, Penguin Books, Victoria, 1976; Jacaranda Press, 1970.

Griffin, Hank et al. Papua New Guinea, A Political History, Heinemann Educational Australia, Victoria, 1979.

Kasaipwalova, John. Hanuabada, Papua Pocket Poets, Port Moresby, Vol. 31, 1972

\_\_\_\_\_. The Reluctant Flame. Papua Pocket Poets, Port Moresby, Vol. 29, 1971.

Kiki, Albert Maori. Ten Thousand Years in a Lifetime, Longman Cheshire, Melbourne, 1982; 1968.

Natachee, Allan. Aia, Papua Pocket Poets, Port Moresby, Vol. 7, 1968.

Somare, Michael. Sana, Niugini Press, Port Moresby, 1975.

Subramani. South Pacific Literature, From Myth to Fabulation, Institute of Pacific Studies, Suva, 1985.

Tawali, Kumalau. Signs in the Sky, Papua Pocket Poets, Port Moresby, Vol. 19, 1970.

#### Magazines and Anthologies—poetry quoted from

Mapun, Bede Dus. "Change," Kovave. Vol. 3, No. 1, Nov. 1971, p. 25.

Natachee, Allan. Oceania, Vol. 22, No. 2, Dec. 1951, pp. 148-161.

Papua New Guinea Writing, No. 19, Sept. 1975, Jack Lahui, ed., "Independence Special," pp. 8-9.

Riyong, Henginike. "Come Under My Wings," Siboda Henari, Papua Pocket Poets, Port Moresby, 1975, n.p.

Simet, Jacob. "Independence," Siboda Henari, Papua Pocket Poets, Port Moresby, 1975, n.p.

Warakai, Vincent. Ondobondo, No. 4, mid-1984, cover.

#### Bibliographies

Krauth, Nigel. "A Bibliography of Papua New Guinea Literature," Asia/Pacific Literature in English, Three Continents Press, Washington, D.C., 1978, pp. 71-81.

Schild, Ulla. Literaturen in Papua-Neuguinea, Dietrich Reimer Verlag, Berlin, 1981.

Stenderup, Vibeke. Pacific Islands Creative Writing, (A select annotated guide for students, librarians, and the general reader), privately published, Højbjerg, Denmark, 1985.

CONTRIBUTORS

PAUL D'ARCY did his undergraduate work at the University of Otago, New Zealand, in Pacific and African history and is presently working towards his MA in Pacific islands history at the University of Hawaii. His present research focuses on traditional warfare in the Pacific islands. He won the Institute for Polynesian Studies Best Graduate Essay Prize for 1985 as well as the Phi Alpha Theta (Hawaii Chapter) Best Graduate Essay Prize for 1986.

RICHARD HAMASAKI is currently enrolled as an MA candidate in the Pacific Islands Studies Program of the University of Hawaii. A creative writer himself, Hamasaki is the general editor and publisher of Seaweeds and Constructions, an independent publication devoted to the creative arts. His most recent issue is A Pacific Islands Collection. Hamasaki won the Pacific Library Research Prize of the Hamilton Library for 1986.

CHANTAL FERRARO is in the PhD program in Anthropology at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. Her dissertation will be on co-operative movements in agriculture in Western Europe. Her paper was written while she spent the 1985-6 academic year in Hawaii. She is planning to return to the Pacific in the future. Ferraro won the Donald D. Johnson Prize of the UH History Department for 1986.

DAVID RICHARDSON, a graduate of Montebello University in Alabama, is currently finishing his MA in Pacific islands history at the University of Hawaii. His thesis deals with the recent political history of Vanuatu.

Richardson won the 1985 Te Rangi Hiroa Fund Prize administered by the University of Papua New Guinea.

ROBERTA SPRAGUE, a long-time resident of the Hawaiian islands, is an MA candidate in Pacific islands history at UH. Her thesis will deal with the history and activities of the Charles Wilkes Expedition to the Pacific islands. She won the Pacific Library Research Prize for 1985, and the J. W. Davidson Prize of the Te Rangi Hiroa Fund Competition for 1986.